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Jack?**

Canwest vs Health Canada

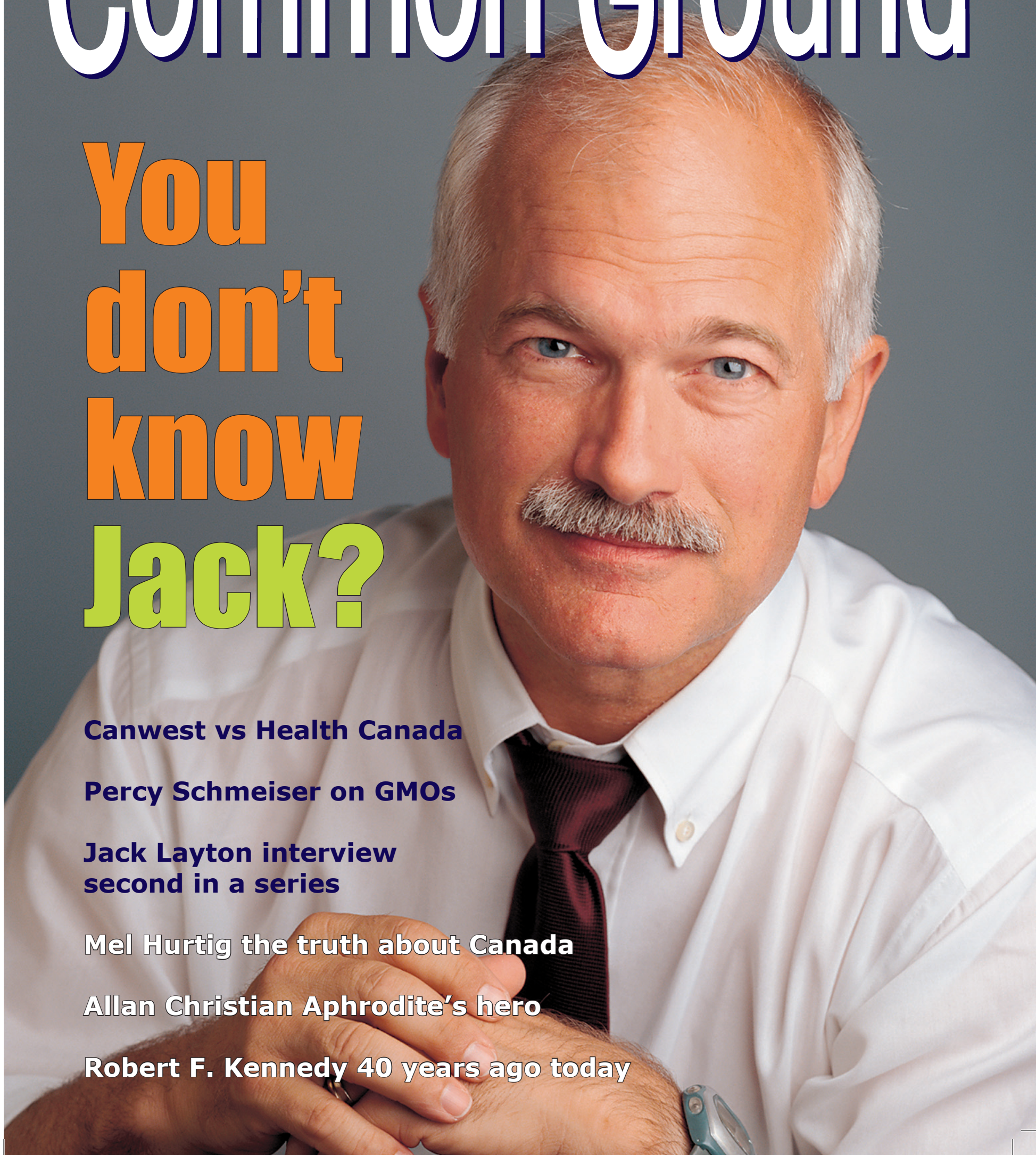
Percy Schmeiser on GMOs

**Jack Layton interview
second in a series**

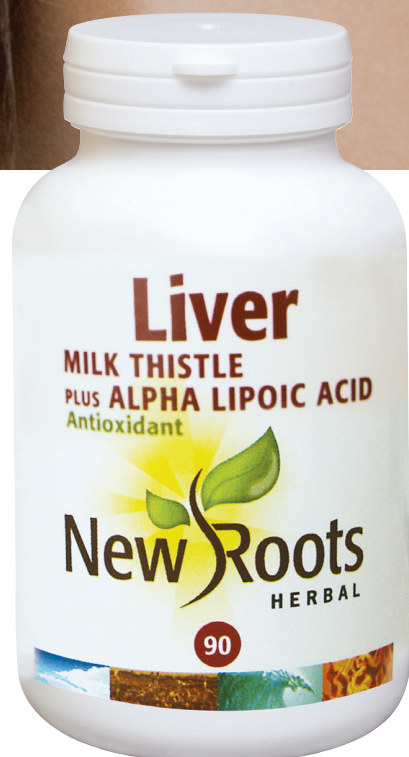
Mel Hurtig the truth about Canada

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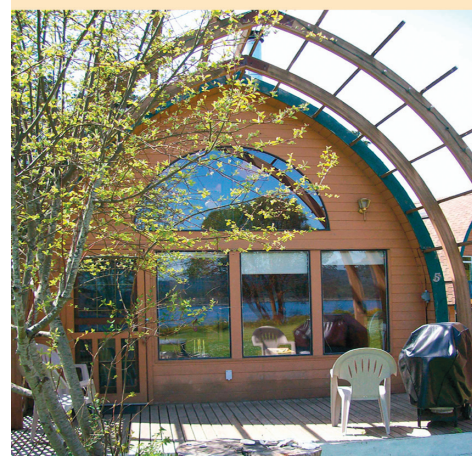


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Publisher & Senior Editor - Joseph Roberts
Comptroller - Rajesh Chawla
Managing Editor - Kaye Nein
Design & Production - Peru Blue Sky

Contributors:

Robert Alstead, Josh Brandon, Alan Cassels, Guy Dauncey, Ishi Dinim, Andrew Fleming, Carolyn Herriot, Mel Hurtig, Vesanto Melina, Barbara Mintzes, Anthony Prosk, Gwen Randall-Young, Joseph Roberts, Percy Schmeiser, Cara Shu-Mei, David Suzuki, Eckhart Tolle, Stephen Vogler

Sales - Head office 604-733-2215
 toll-free 1-800-365-8897

Contact Common Ground:

Phone: 604-733-2215
 Fax: 604-733-4415
 Advertising: admin@commonground.ca
 Editorial: editor@commonground.ca

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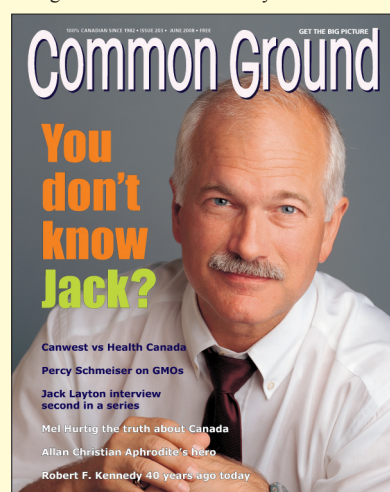
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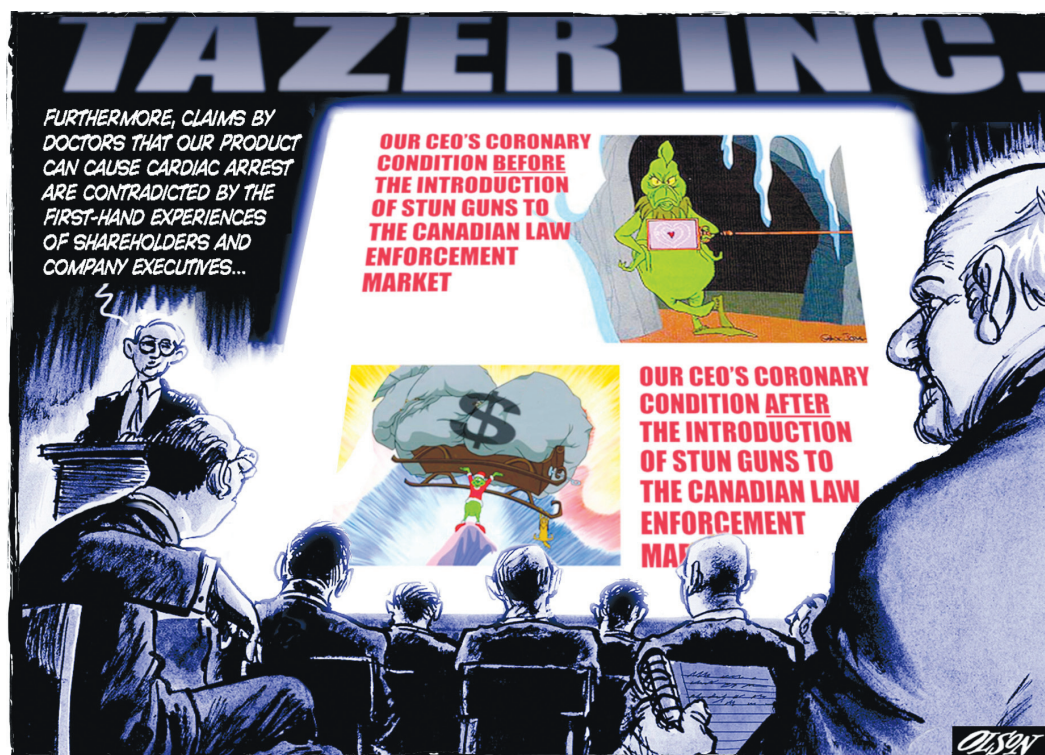
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Non-lethal weapons are defined as not intended to kill or cause great bodily harm to more than 25% of the intended targets. Other terms for the category include: less-lethal weapons, less-than-lethal weapons, non-deadly weapons and compliance weapons. (wikipedia)



Percy Schmeiser on GMO tour

by Josh Brandon

HEALTH

It's a simple right to know. More than eight out of ten Canadians want genetically engineered (GE) foods labelled. In 40 countries around the world, labelling GE food is already mandatory. On May 7, Canadian Members of Parliament voted on Bill C-517, which would have made GE labelling mandatory. Despite consumer activism, MPs voted against it by a margin of 156 to 101. Once again, the powerful interests of the genetic engineering and chemical lobby cheated Canadians out of the right to choose healthy food



and protect their environment. To find out how your MP voted on the bill, go to www.greenpeace.ca/c-517vote.

GE ingredients are found in 70 per cent of processed foods, mostly as ingredients made from corn, soy, canola and cotton. There is no long-term evidence to show these products are safe. Recent peer-reviewed studies have shown that rats fed genetically engineered corn showed higher rates of kidney and liver problems than rats fed conventional corn. This is one of the reasons why Dr. Perry Kendall, BC's provincial health officer, recommended mandatory labelling in his 2005 annual report. Dr. John Blatherwick, Vancouver's chief medical health officer, has also called on provincial and federal governments to make GE labelling mandatory, so that any allergens or toxins found can be traced. Instead, GE foods remain as hidden from health authorities as they are from ordinary Canadians.

Growing GE crops can have damaging impacts on the environment, use more industrial fertilizers and often rely on dangerous chemical pesticides. There are over 200 cases of GE crops entering the food chain or contaminat-

ing neighbouring fields. Some of these cases, such as the illegal GE rice discovered in Canadian supermarkets last fall, or the infamous Starlink corn incident, cost farmers and the food industry over a billion dollars to clean up. In Western Canada, GE canola contamination is widespread.

Many communities and individuals are fighting back. Saskatchewan farmer Percy Schmeiser was sued by Monsanto in 1998 after his field became contaminated with patented GE canola. Schmeiser fought back and recently won a countersuit against Monsanto. Worldwide, thousands of communities have declared themselves GE free, including Powell River and the southern Gulf Islands. MLA Gregor Robertson has tabled Right to Know legislation that, if passed, would see GE foods labelled, better regulated, and the public better informed on toxic and cancer causing products.

The Society for a Genetically Engineered Free BC,
Mountain Equipment Coop,
Common Ground & Greenpeace
present:

**Making BC genetically
engineered free**
a speakers' tour

SPEAKERS:

Percy Schmeiser, Saskatchewan farmer who fought Monsanto

Tom Rudge, lead campaigner for a GE moratorium in the Yukon

Colin Palmer, Chair, Powell River Regional District, the first GE free zone in Canada

Josh Brandon, Agriculture Campaigner, Greenpeace

Vancouver Public Library
Alice Mackay Room, 4th July, 7pm

Saanich

Organic Islands Festival
5th July, 2pm-3pm

Victoria

St. Ann's Academy
835 Humboldt St., 5th July, 7pm

Courtenay

Filberg Centre, 411 Anderton Ave.,
6th July, 7pm

Salt Spring Island

Meaden Hall, 7th July, 7pm

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Food and special needs

NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina MS, RD

Each of us is unique in our food and nutrition needs and this is no less true for those of us with various disabilities. I've begun to discover some of the special challenges and solutions to be encountered while I've been working with a heart warming non-profit society in Abbotsford called the HOME Society.

Food has often been used as a way of placating, distracting or rewarding people receiving special care. This can be particularly true for those with poor impulse control. The foods often chosen are high in fat, sugar, and salt but low in

caregivers also carry far more weight than they want to. Reversing the process can be a companionable activity.

A nutritious solution for some situations is a fruit tray, or a platter heaped with colourful raw vegetables. These can provide a low-calorie, healthy snack to serve when returning from an outing or while watching TV as well as an artistic accompaniment to festive meals, meetings, and special events. Fruit and veggie platters are also a great way to get vitamins, antioxidants, protective phytochemicals, and fibre.

If a platter is set out before a meal

Immediately fulfilling a particular food craving can be tremendously important for people whose blood sugar plummets.

nutrition. Fast food is everywhere and can be hard to avoid. Also, immediately fulfilling a particular food craving can be tremendously important for people whose blood sugar plummets. Hypoglycemia, addictions, and diabetes tend to run in families. Certain medications, such as psychotropic drugs, can often lead to substantial weight gain, especially in the first three months of use.

People in wheelchairs or those who already have gained excess weight may have little inclination or opportunity to exercise. And it's not only the people supported who are overweight; many

when people come by to check out what's for dinner, they'll nibble so many before dinner is served that you won't need to worry that they won't eat their veggies.

Vesanto Melina is a dietitian and author based in Langley. She will be presenting on the topic of food and special needs at the B.C. Association for Community Living Conference on June 14 at the Sheraton Hotel in Surrey. Call 604-882-6782 for a personal consultation or visit www.nutrispeak.com.

Raw Vegetable Platter

Choose from the following veggies, served on their own or with a dip such as hummus.

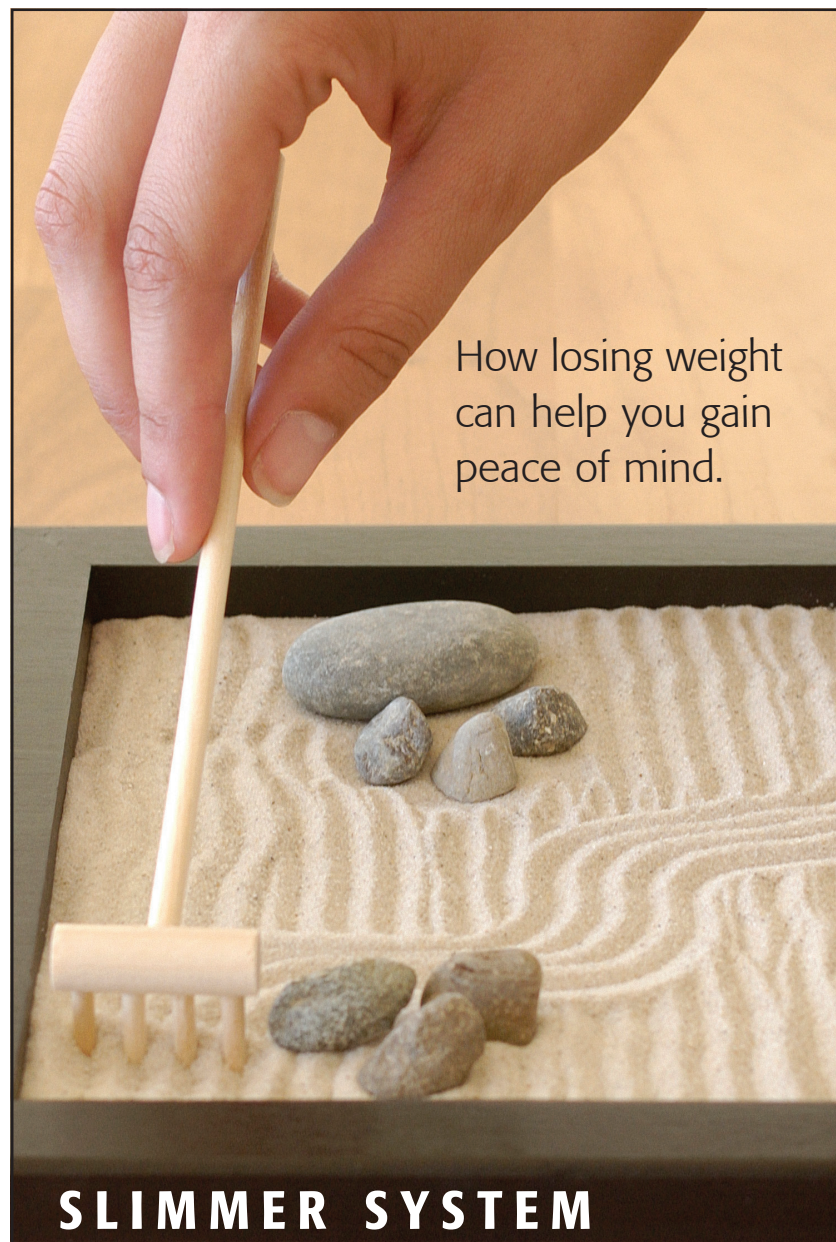
- asparagus tips
- broccoli florets
- carrot sticks
- cauliflower florets
- celery sticks
- cherry tomatoes
- cucumber discs
- green onions
- green or snow pea pods
- jicama sticks
- mushrooms, sliced or whole
- parsnip sticks
- red, yellow, orange, or green pepper strips
- snow peas or peas in the pod
- sweet potato strips (dipped in water with a little lemon juice to prevent browning)
- turnip strips
- yam strips
- zucchini strips

Hummus

This nourishing spread is high in protein, iron, magnesium, zinc, vitamin C, folate, and thiamin. One half cup provides 10 grams of protein. Also look for a variety of flavours of seasoned hummus in supermarket coolers, natural foods stores, and local markets. The following recipe makes 2-1/2 cups

- 2 cups cooked or canned chick-peas
- 1/3 cup tahini
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 1/3 cup water or the cooking water from the chick-peas
- 1-2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1-1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp salt (less if using canned beans)
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley (optional)
- 1-2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil (optional)

In the bowl of a food processor, combine chick-peas, tahini, lemon juice, water, garlic, cumin, salt and cayenne. Puree until smooth, occasionally scraping down the sides of the bowl. Add parsley and olive oil and blend for 30 seconds. Add seasoning.



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Canwest sues Health Canada

direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs at stake

by Barbara Mintzes

An Ontario court case that is currently underway with very little publicity could have enormous consequences for Canada's healthcare system and the public's health.

Canwest MediaWorks, owner of Global TV and various newspapers across Canada, including the *Vancouver Sun*, *Province* and *National Post*, is suing the federal government in the Ontario Superior Court. The company claims that the Food and Drugs Act's prohibition of direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs is a breach of its freedom of expression under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

If Canwest is successful, we may soon find our airwaves, news media and many of our public spaces flooded with ads for prescription drugs.

Anyone who has watched US TV

.....
In 2000, Merck spent more advertising Vioxx to the US public than Pepsi-Cola spent marketing Pepsi.
.....

lately has seen the ubiquitous commercials admonishing viewers to "Ask your doctor" about this or that medicine. You thought you were healthy? That bit of heartburn could be a lurking sign of damage to your esophagus. Feeling a bit down? It may be a chemical imbalance that Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil or a host of similar pills could fix. Never mind that you just lost your job. Just pop a pill.

That Canwest is bringing this legal case forward indicates just how lucrative this advertising market really is. A media company can run any editorial content it wishes pertaining to drugs. However, under the current law, it cannot sell advertising space to drug companies to run ads featuring prescription drugs. This is the issue currently being disputed in Ontario.

A public interest coalition of non-profit health groups and unions has obtained standing in the Ontario case in support of the law. It includes CUPE, the Federation of Nurses' Unions, Women and Health Protection and the Canadian Health Coalition, among others. The coalition is addressing concerns about the effects of skyrocketing drug costs, vis-à-vis employee health benefits,

and the potential harmful effects of the drugs, especially relating to women.

Last year, drug companies spent more than \$5 billion on direct-to-consumer advertising in the US. If similar advertising is allowed in Canada, the pharmaceutical industry would be expected to initially spend around \$500 million, with further spending to follow.

Canada's law is similar to that of most other countries so this case could have international repercussions if Canwest wins. Currently, only the US and New Zealand allow this type of advertising. Prescription drug advertising is generally banned as a public health measure because these medicines tend to treat serious health problems that are not easily self-diagnosed, and prescription drugs are riskier than medicines a person can buy over the counter.

The arthritis drug Vioxx (rofecoxib) is a case in point. It was one of the most heavily advertised drugs between 1999 and 2004, its length of stay on the market. In 2000, Merck spent more advertising Vioxx to the US public than Pepsi-Cola spent marketing Pepsi. That was the same year that the VIGOR trial was completed. This was the first large-scale study of Vioxx to show that it led to more than four times the rate of heart attacks than Naproxen, another arthritis drug. An estimated 88,000 to 140,000 heart attacks occurred in the US due to Vioxx use, and while not all of them can be attributed to advertising, the ads clearly helped to push sales.

Vioxx remained on the market for another four years, during which time Merck continued to advertise it heavily to the US public, in ads featuring former Olympic skater Dorothy Hamill.

Recently, Merck agreed to pay \$58 million as part of a multi-state settlement against accusations that its Vioxx ads deceptively played down the drug's health risks.

Vioxx isn't the only widely advertised drug to be removed from the market for safety reasons. More recently, Zelnorm (tegaserod), a drug for irritable bowel syndrome in women, has also been withdrawn because it was found to lead to heart disease – in approximately one in every 1,000 users. When the FDA announced the withdrawal, it also noted that the drug was not very effective.

One of the greatest concerns about prescription drug advertising is that it blurs the boundaries between normal life circumstances and actual health problems. US researchers tested this in

a study using women actors pretending to be patients. The women made unannounced visits to family doctors and were randomly assigned to either request Paxil, an advertised medicine, or not. They were also randomly assigned to have symptoms of depression or "adjustment disorder," essentially routine life problems. If a woman asked for Paxil she was just as likely to get it whether she had clinical depression or "adjustment disorder."

In the most recent surveys of the US public, around a third of respondents stated they had discussed an advertised medicine with their doctor. From 2000 to 2005, prescriptions for sleeping pills increased by 60% in the US. Two US brands, Lunesta and Ambien, were heavily advertised in a fierce competition for market share. The US public was caught in the middle. When used regularly, sleeping pills lead to tolerance, dependency and cause a higher rate of falls, fractures and traffic accidents. People over the age of 60, who use them for more than five days consecutively, are more likely to experience harm than benefit. In a large combined analysis of all clinical trials, this was as much the case for the newer drugs as the older ones.

Public health concerns about drug

.....
Prescription drug advertising is generally banned as a public health measure because these medicines tend to treat serious health problems that are not easily self-diagnosed.
.....

advertising include the reality that drug promotion leads to increased drug costs. This is because only the newest and most expensive drugs are advertised to the public. Advertising leads both to an overall increase in the use of medicines and to higher costs per prescription because of rapid uptake of the new, expensive medicines.

Most new medicines are no safer or effective than the existing alternatives. This is as true for the most heavily advertised medicines as for others. Take Nexium (esomeprazole), a drug for acid reflux. Astra Zeneca spent \$1.2 billion advertising it to the US

public, yet it's virtually the same as the generic omeprazole, which is much cheaper.

In the Ontario case, Canwest is arguing not only that it has a right to run pharmaceutical advertising, but also that partial enforcement of the law has led to a situation of unfair competition. US cable TV targeting Canadian audiences is full of prescription drug ads. It doesn't have to be. Technically, it's easy to replace ads, and for marketing purposes, local ads replace US ads all the time. The federal government has not insisted that this be the case for drug ads that are illegal in Canada.

Similarly, North American editions of magazines run US ads that are illegal in Canada. Often, the same companies have a UK edition without illegal ads. Again, this is an enforcement issue.

Further, since around the year 2000, the federal government has allowed companies to run branded "reminder" ads in Canadian media, such as the "We are the champions" Viagra ads. This is possible under a new interpretation of a 1975 regulation that was brought in to allow price advertising. It is consistent neither with the spirit of the regulation – introduced to make the public aware that generics are cheaper than similar brands – nor with the way it was interpreted for 25 years.

Canwest has a valid argument that the law is not being adequately enforced. But does that mean we need to scrap the law? If the police look the other way when a corner store sells cigarettes to minors, getting rid of the age restriction is not necessarily the best solution.

Ads for medicines are dangerous because pharmaceutical companies use the same emotional branding techniques used by other companies promoting other products, with the objective of creating a connection and a desire for a drug.

When it comes to medicines, however, newer and more are not necessarily better. As the world witnessed with Vioxx, the concept of newer and more can be a very dangerous marketing technique.

For more information about the Ontario court case and copies of expert testimony, see <http://www.whp-apsf.ca/en/index.html>.

Dr. Barbara Mintzes is a core faculty member at UBC. She investigates drug safety and effectiveness, and provincial drug financing decisions. www.chspr.ubc.ca/about/faculty/mintzes

Letters to the editor

Kill Bill ... C-51

What a great cover on the May issue. How ironic it is that there was not a word about Bill C-51 in the interview [with Stéphane Dion] and now it turns out that it will be up to Dion to decide whether this outrageous piece of legislation becomes law.

What an opportunity for Jack Layton to be the true defender of Canadian Rights and Freedoms while the mouse squirms to avoid an election! Harper will triple the price of Vitamin C by having us get a prescription from a medical doctor! And what about the Third Reich system of regulation and enforcement?

Everybody wants to be sure their vitamins and other Natural Health products are safe, but C-51 is Trojan Horse Legislation sponsored by Big Pharma to unlawfully suppress Canadian citizens' rights and freedoms!

Paul Robson, Toronto

[Editor's note: The interview with Stéphane Dion took place before Bill C-51 was introduced.. As well we contacted Jack Layton's office asking about Bill C-51 but got no reply. So it is up to you readers to educate your MPs and protect your access to natural products.]

Help natural health & healing win

John le Carré once stated the actions of Big Pharma are one of the best examples of the saying "the biggest problem with the end of the World War is the right side lost but the wrong side won." He pointed out that dumping dubious drugs on Third World countries and donating out-of-date pharmaceuticals – while also getting huge tax breaks – were par for the course for the world's multinational drug companies.

So it is no surprise that a right-wing government like Stephen Harper's Conservatives would turn their big guns upon alternative medicine. After all, they've got to keep those huge donations from Big Pharma rolling in. It's also no surprise that a corrupt corporate media would jump on the bandwagon. *MacLean's* just published an article about how dangerous vitamins can be!

Of course natural health products can be dangerous if used improperly! But what about those horribly overpriced bitter pills that are foisted onto the public by the drug companies?

Supposedly introduced for the purpose "of increasing health and safety generally for a number of therapeutic products" Bill C-51 "fills the bill." according to federal health minister Tony Clement.

When *The Georgia Straight* asked Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies, a national association representing more than 50 drug companies, for

interviews, no one was available. After all, if one can operate from the shadows with the government's help, why expose oneself to needless publicity?

Perhaps even at this late hour we can cast some light upon the dubious actions of Big Pharma.

Dennis Peacock, Clearwater

Librarians ask Canwest to stop suing Briemberg over satirical piece

[Open letter to Leonard Asper, pres. of Canwest Global Communications.]

At its annual general meeting on April 19, 2008, the British Columbia Library Association passed the attached resolution calling for Canwest to withdraw its legal suit against Mordecai Briemberg and the others charged with having produced a parody of *The Vancouver Sun* in June 2007.

The British Columbia Library Association is a non-profit, independent, voluntary association established in 1911. Our nearly 850 members include librarians, library personnel, trustees and other interested individuals; corporate, government, school and academic libraries; publishers, and library supply companies.

Intellectual freedom is a central tenet of librarianship; librarians have fought for generations for freedom of expression and access to information. Journalism, at its best, shares a commitment to these principles. The role of the media in a democracy is to provide a forum for open discussion and debate, not to stifle dissent. We are therefore especially disappointed that Canwest has sought to use its corporate resources to intimidate its critics and silence those with political positions different from its own.

Satire and parody have important intellectual traditions. Well-known satirists include Aristophanes, Horace, Chaucer, Jonathan Swift, Daniel Defoe, and Mark Twain – all people who were able to use hyperbole and humour to make their points without being sued by the objects of their parodies. Canwest's suit is an attack on a crucial tool of free expression and threatens to have a chilling effect on public discourse.

We urge Canwest to drop its suit against Mordecai Briemberg and the six Jane and John Does named in your writ. The free exchange of ideas (including ideas with which we may disagree) is a critical component of a democratic society, and ought not to be undermined by the very institutions that make such exchange possible.

Lynne Jordon, President British Columbia Library Association

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or **Tony Knudson 604-540-9304 or 866-295-5305**





DRUG BUST

Alan Cassels

Hidden costs of private drug insurance

Just as your doctor is pulling out his prescription pad to write a script for something that will ease your pain, he looks up and asks, "Are you on a private drug insurance plan?"

It's a common question and innocent enough. He's wondering if you've got extra coverage, maybe an extended health plan with Blue Cross or Great West, which helps pay for your prescription. Nothing could be wrong with that question, could it?

Yes, there could be. In my estimation the proper response might be a question of your own, "Tell me doctor, why is my having private or extended medical coverage even relevant?" At the risk of sounding pedantic, I maintain that whether or not you've got private drug insurance is irrelevant. After he has diagnosed what is wrong with you, his job is to decide the safest, most effective and most cost effective treatment for you.

.....
Getting faster access to a potentially more irrational and dangerous prescription often is the hidden cost you are paying for private health insurance.

Extended health insurance plans aren't in the business of making value-based decisions about which drugs are safe and most cost-effective (hence deserving to be covered), and which are not. They are there to ease the financial pain. In contrast, it is the policy of public medical plans to make value judgements about which drugs merit coverage. Along the way they encourage prescribing in the interests of value and effectiveness. A person's drug insurance coverage can mean the difference between whether you get a prescription filled or not, and it also may give more access to newer medications. Sound good? Not completely! Getting faster access to a potentially more

irrational and dangerous prescription often is the hidden cost you are paying for private health insurance.

For example, I examined a list of the top 20 prescribed drugs in 2007 compiled by Emergis, a company that manages drug claims for about half the private drug plans in Canada. This "Top 20 List" contains those drugs which, due to a combination of cost and volume of prescriptions, eat the lions' share of your private insurance dollar. These top 20 drugs are the big ticket items taken by millions of people and cost you, and your drug plan, hundreds of millions of dollars.

So, what drugs are on the Top 20 List? For starters, there are five cholesterol-lowering agents on the list. Lipitor, a brand which dominates the current medical love-affair with chemically alterations of our cholesterol, tops the list. Is the widespread prescribing of Lipitor due to its being more effective, safer or more

cost effective over its competitors? Not really. All the statin drugs, more or less, do the same thing but both our public and private drug plans pay for all of them, regardless of the huge differences in cost between generically-available statins and brand name drugs like Lipitor. What is most surprising, coming in at # 6 on the Top 20 List, is Crestor, the newest anti-cholesterol drug on the market. Crestor has been labelled by Worstpills.org (a site dedicated to delivering objective evaluations of prescription drugs) as "Danger Do Not Use" because it can cause kidney, muscle and liver damage. In fact, Worstpills reports that "several major U.S. insurers, including WellPoint/Blue

Cross, with 16 million beneficiaries, have refused to reimburse for this drug because of safety concerns." As far as I know, no private drug plan in Canada refuses to pay for any statin drug for safety reasons. So your doc says, "Got a drug plan? You do? Okay, here's some Crestor"

In the "Bizarre and Unexplainable" category of their Top 20 Drugs we find Celebrex at # 15, a drug which had three sisters—all now removed from the market for a variety of safety concerns. One of these sisters, Vioxx, was at the heart of the biggest drug disaster this century and responsible for tens of thousands of deaths in the US. Why Celebrex gets so widely prescribed, even now, is a mystery. There is no evidence that it's more effective than other anti-inflammatory drugs. Furthermore, it is more expensive than many equivalent drugs and its label warns of the risk of heart attack. So, why is it still so popular? Maybe it's because your MD says, "Got a drug plan? Good, here's some Celebrex..."

Also on the Top 20 List are five agents of the proton pump inhibitor (PPI) class of drugs. These five include Losec, Nexium, Pantoloc, and Pariet, all of which are used to treat ulcers and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). They are all more or less equivalent in effectiveness but can vary widely in price. If you really needed one of these you could pay anywhere from \$45 to \$100 per month depending on which drug your doctor prescribes. In British Columbia if PharmaCare is paying for your PPI, you'll get the cheapest one. But if you've got a private drug plan you can spend oodles more, and not actually buy any more health effectiveness. Your doc asks, "Got a drug plan? Good, here's some Nexium." The next thing you know you're walking out of the pharmacy with a \$100 prescription. Even though these drugs are very effective alarm bells recently began to ring regarding just how often they are prescribed. Earlier this year an article in the British Medical Journal

reviewed evidence around the use of PPIs and concluded that only 10 percent of the people on acid suppressive therapy (PPIs) were found to have an "acceptable inclination" for these drugs. Which is to say that most of the dollars you and your private drug plan pay for those five PPIs is wasted.

Older heartburn drugs like Tagamet or Zantac, and other drugs available over the counter at a fraction of the price often get bypassed if you have a private drug plan. In reality, most people, if they altered their lifestyle or lost 10 pounds, wouldn't need a heartburn drug at all.

The Top 20 List is a real eye-opener. It's full of drugs that public drug plans either restrict, or won't pay for at all. We think our private drug plan is providing good medicine and the best healthcare, but it could be just the opposite. If your doctor asks "Got a drug plan?" you might deflect him by asking his opinion of available treatments based on safety, effectiveness and cost. If there are a bunch of drugs that do the same thing, ask for the generic or the cheapest of the lot. You can always move up the chain if these don't work. You're not helping anyone, except the drug firms by wasting yours or your private drug plan's money.

Albert Einstein once said, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." My health insurance corollary to this quote goes like this, "Not everything that is paid for works, and not everything that works is paid for." Maybe this is a bit of advice worth remembering the next time that pen is poised over the prescription pad.

If you think you have been injured by a prescription drug, you should call the Canada Vigilance Program at 1-866-234-2345. You can also submit an adverse reaction report on the Med Effect Canada website (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/index_e.html).

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The yoga of sound

keeps the music alive



Adapted from Snatam Kaur's web blog by Anthony Prosk, B.Mus, B. Ed

We never know what to expect when we go on tour. Sometimes we are in large cathedrals, at other times small yoga centers. Our audiences can be huge crowds enthusiastically singing along or people who have never heard our music. Sometimes the crowds are small. Sometimes there is no audience at all...like when I'm home...and the music continues. My husband and I especially enjoy playing music together at the end of the day.

The opposite is when we set up for our concerts. We use the same back drop, the same stage equipment, the same instruments, sing the same songs...virtually the same everything. On tour I bring a set of outfits for the whole week. Four weeks on the road is very repetitive. Same, same, same.

The repetitiveness of the tour combined with the vast variation we experience is challenging. My commitment to peace on the planet, starting with peace in my own heart, has enabled me to stay the course. This process has led me to the most important place for growth, within myself. Long ago my teacher Yogi Bhajan taught me to sing from the seat of my soul to God and Guru and nothing else. Through my concerts I receive and share that same blessing.

The tabla player Sat Nam Singh Ramgotra said if he didn't enjoying playing tabla and the sound of the music, what was the use? I often ask myself that question. Am I enjoying this? Is it connecting with me, my own heart and my own soul? If the soul's enjoyment is not there then I must change something. It may be a little shift in a note, or a combination of notes. Perhaps a shift in my thoughts or emotions in relation to the music or a shift in my breathing. It can be a large shift like taking music lessons and to expand my knowledge base. All of these shifts are a part of my growth as a musician.

I keep the music alive by connecting with my soul and singing to the God within from my soul's voice. When I do that people seem to hear what I'm singing as if I am touching the God within them. I know there is a vast universe of learning within each of us, and the deeper we make the connection with the Divine inside, the deeper we will be able to connect with everyone and everything in our lives.

Snatam Kaur has the voice of an angel who shares the sounds of the divine. Hear her live in concert at 7:30 pm, Saturday, June 7 at West Point Grey United Church 4595 West 8th Ave. Tickets at Yoga West 604-732-YOGA (9642) or at www.Spiritvoyage.com. For more info visit www.snatamkaur.com

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The truth about Canada

Mel Hurtig talks about important, astonishing and amazing
things Canadians should know about this land of ours.

Imagine if Canada was a character on the reality TV show *Intervention*, in which families attempt to salvage the lives of their self-destructive members. From the evidence uncovered by Mel Hurtig, our country would be an easily-manipulated dolt with poor impulse control, memory problems and a bad habit of pawing off valuable possessions. In *Canadian Intervention*, Hurtig would play the combined role of therapist and Marine gunnery sergeant, trying to convince Canada that it's not in its best interests to hang out with smooth-talking pundits from right-wing think tanks, tax-dodging CEOs, weapons makers or self-described "journalists" who can't be bothered to check their sources.

It's a thankless task, but Hurtig obviously loves his country, and has spent years trying to steer it in a different direction. Once owner of one of the largest book retail operations in Canada, he founded Hurtig Publishers in 1972 and later launched *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Founder and past-president of the Council of Canadians, Hurtig was elected leader of the National Party of Canada in 1992 and led it in the federal election a year later. Now in his seventies, the energetic and animated Hurtig is promoting his seventh book, *The Truth about Canada: Some Important, Some Astonishing and Some Truly Appalling Things All Canadians Should Know About Our Country*. We sat down together at a coffee shop in downtown Vancouver to discuss our nation's latest woes.

Common Ground: Many Canadians suspect there's a discrepancy between what the mainstream media reports on Canadian social and economic issues and the actual truth. But it's as if the numbers in your book are from a parallel dimension. On almost every major issue, from foreign investment to poverty in Canada, it seems the Canadian media has been either ignorant or misleading about the facts.

Mel Hurtig: That's why I wrote this book. About six years ago I got so pissed off reading *Stats Canada Daily*. It's the first thing I read when I go to the Net. So I would read really interesting stuff and the next morning it either wasn't there or it was so badly distorted from what the actual report was. I got madder, madder

and madder. And then I signed a book contract. Over three years of research I found much more than I ever dreamed of. Horrible distortions by the media to fit their ideology. You get a right-wing publisher like a Conrad Black or Izzy Asper hiring a right-wing publisher, and then the right-wing publisher hires a right-wing editor, and then the right-wing editor hires a right-wing columnist, and you end up getting the kind of junk that appears in *The National Post*. I think *The Globe and Mail* is a pretty good paper, but their ideological view is so different than the way most Canadians think. And the other thing I found, the more I looked at this book, is that when the Fraser Institute or the CD Howe Institute or the Conference Board of Canada issues a report, the media



tends to publish it word for word on their front page or the front page of the business section. And very few journalists in this country bother to take the time to check.

CG: Which they would do for any other source.

MH: Exactly. The Canadian Council of Chief executives issues a document, and it's published word for word as Gospel, whereas when the "left-wing" Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives publishes something, it very rarely gets published in the media. They never check the stuff from the big "think tanks." And [*National Post* contributor] Diane Francis

comes out with a statement that Canadians buy up more companies in the United States than Americans buy up here in this country, which is absolute nonsense! All the press gallery has to do is pick up the phone and call a hundred yards away to Statistics Canada or Industry Canada and get the exact figures. I quote in the book where prominent Canadian executives such as the CEO of the Royal Bank of Canada make statements about Canadians buying up the States, which are simply not true. These guys say, "Americans only bought up 1,046 Canadian companies." The true answer is that they bought up over 6,000 Canadian companies and I give example after example. On my desk at home I have, to use the operative word, bullshit, from the CEOs of Canadian businesses. That's why I wrote this book, why I spent three years putting it together. The key thing about this book is that it's all sourced. We know exactly where the numbers come from. And instead of getting BS like, "well, our standard of living would drop if it wasn't for American capital," I show that most of the takeovers in this country are accomplished by our own money by our own Canadian banks.

CG: I'm surprised that no one has thought to do a book like this until now, let alone report it in the papers. These figures aren't squirreled away in some secret archive somewhere.

MH: There are some wonderful journalists at *The Globe and Mail*, some really good business reporters. Why don't they pick up the annual report from Statistics Canada? Or why don't they look at the annual publications from the OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development], as I did? One of the strengths of this book it compares Canada to the 29 other OECD countries. It's astonishing that out of 30 OECD countries, we are twenty-second in terms of poverty, we're twenty-fifth in social spending, we're twenty-first in low paid jobs. Only twenty countries have fewer low paid jobs. We're twenty-second in unemployment insurance benefits. We're eighteenth in investment in new machinery in equipment. We're twenty-fifth in research and development. How the hell can we be competitive, how can we be productive, if we don't

invest money in new machinery and equipment? And these guys all they do is complain about their tax load. We're twenty-first in our tax load. The tax load in this country is now way down below the American corporate tax loads. Is that the picture you get from *The National Post*? Is that the picture you get from *The Globe and Mail*? No way. What you get from these guys is we've got to have lower taxes in this country. As corporate taxes have gone down, so has our ranking at the World Economic Forum in competitiveness.

I was going to call my book "A Perfect X." Here's what happened to individual taxes – they've gone up from lower left to upper right, while corporate taxes have gone in the opposite direction. So it is people like us who are paying more taxes on average by far

invest in things. But one of the things is you've got to make sure you have is a really good educational system. So where do we stand in terms of spending on education as a percentage of GDP in comparison to other countries? Ninety-first, for Gods sake! Ninety-first!

CG: I think a lot of people would be surprised to learn the UN has criticized Canada on human rights and poverty on two separate occasions, most recently in 2006.

MH: In 2007 Canada had the ninth largest gross domestic product in the world. And were 25th in social spending, twenty-third in poverty etc. etc. And what does that tell you? We've got a goddamn lousy distribution of income in this country. The rich are getting richer. The disparity between the poor and the rich is now at a 30 year high, and it's

It's astonishing that out of thirty OECD countries, we are twenty-second in terms of poverty, we're twenty-fifth in social spending, we're twenty-first in low paid jobs.

than most other OECD countries. I think we're the fourth highest in terms of personal taxation amount in the 30 OECD countries. And it's that way because corporations are not paying their proper share of taxes.

One of my main complaints in this book is what are these guys doing with their all-time record profits. To digress for a minute - I don't think this is in the book - I recently showed that the banks in 2006 made a profit of 89 billion dollars. And guess what the rate of effective taxation was?

CG: What percent?

MH: Fifteen percent. Compare that to the taxes you pay and its ridiculous. So what these big corporations have been doing is not investing in new equipment, not investing in new R and D [research and development]. Instead they've been shipping the money out of the country.

CG: It's astonishing that we are fifty-fourth in the world in terms of doctors per 100,000 patients. Even more astonishing is that Cuba, under a blockade, has twice as many doctors per 100,000 patients.

MH: More than twice as many. Cuba has 591 doctors per 100,000, Canada has 214. But why is that? Because a bunch of our bureaucrats decided we're going to start curtailing registration in medical schools. All kinds of really bright young men and women who want to become doctors have to leave the country to become doctors.

I think one of the most astonishing figures in my book has to do with the fact everyone knows the world is becoming a more competitive place. So what do you do if that's the case in a country like Canada and you want to maintain your standard of living? You've got to

getting higher every year.

CG: In your book you talk about the high levels of foreign ownership and write that our federal trade minister travelled to Beijing to convince the Chinese to buy up whatever the US and Europe don't already own. That's especially ironic considering China is far more defensive about foreign investment than we are, as is the US. What part of economic nationalism don't we understand?

MH: No other developed country in the world would dream of allowing the degree of foreign ownership and foreign control that we have. There are 36 different sectors of the Canadian economy that are majority foreign owned and controlled. How many of them are there in the United States?

CG: Zero?

MH: Zero. Did you think the Americans would ever allow their chemical industry, their rubber industry, their computer industry, their petroleum industry, etc. to be majority foreign owned? I mean what a laugh!

CG: Do you remember the outcry when China attempted to take over the California-based oil firm, Unocal?

MH: Remember the outcry when the Japanese took over Rockefeller Centre? The foreign ownership in the United States is minimal compared to Canada. Not one person in Ottawa – not in the department of finance, not in the Bank of Canada, not in Statistics Canada, not in the Privy Council – not one person knows how much of the buy-up of our country has been accomplished by our good loyal patriotic Canadian banks financing the takeovers of our Canadian companies.

CG: What I found most disturbing in your book is the anecdote toward the end

continued p.30...

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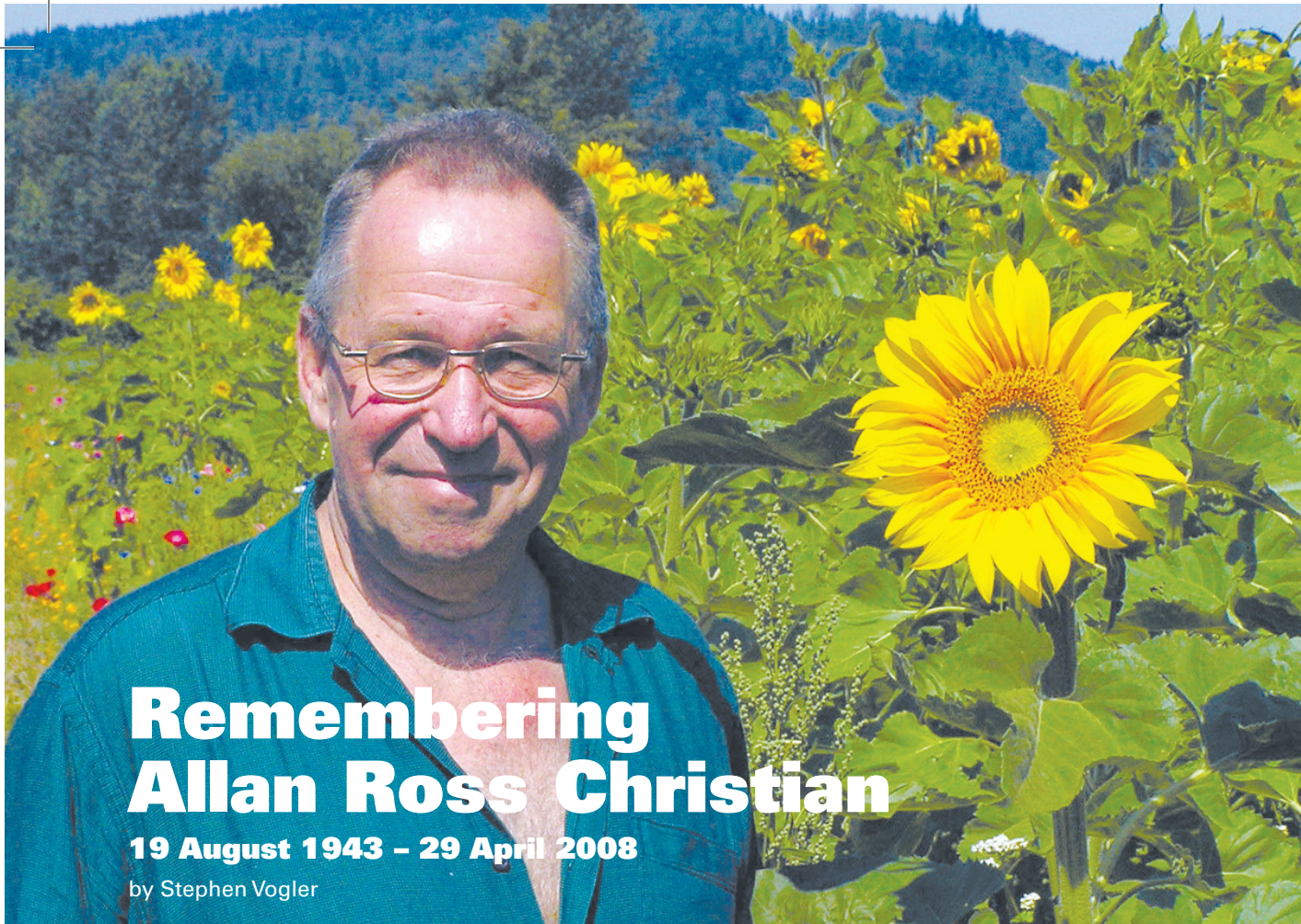
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Remembering Allan Ross Christian

19 August 1943 – 29 April 2008

by Stephen Vogler

How does one create Vancouver's most loved organic café, a place so infused with casual farm ambience and warm humanity it feels as though an arm has stretched in from the fertile Fraser Valley and offered up a handful of produce still tingling with bucolic energy. For Allan Christian, founder of Aphrodite's Organic Café & Pie Shop on West Fourth Avenue, the link from farm to city was part of the natural arc of his life, the culmination of an adventurous journey which sadly came to an end on April 29th, 2008.

Allan grew up on a family farm in southeast Saskatchewan with three younger sisters and a host of cousins near the small town of Rocanville. The one-room Prosperity School house was down a long country road, the New Finland Church that served the Finnish community on his mother's side, down another. Allan's boyhood on the expansive prairie fields gave way to jerry-rigged motorcycles, Jitterbug dances and big cars. It was one such 1965 Meteor that took him and his new bride, Gaylene Howie from the nearby town of Tantallon, first east to Port Arthur, then west to the coast.

With dairy cows and wheat fields firmly in his past, Allan worked his way from a bank to an insurance company as he and Gaylene raised their daughter Peggy and son Derrick in North Vancouver. By the time I met Allan (my future father-in-law), he was in his mid-forties with two grown children, a successful insurance business, a house in North Van and condo in Whistler, a 31 foot mahogany Chris-Craft named Yolana, and plenty of time for extended martini lunches with friends and associates.

But it wasn't long before Allan's high-rolling life came crashing down.

A couple of bad business deals during the volatile eighties market along with failing health due to excessive eating and drinking caused him to reach a life-changing realization: leave this life-style behind or there might be no tomorrow. After losing it all, including his 27 year marriage, Allan quit drinking cold-turkey and forged ahead in search of something else.

He rented a dingy basement suite in Vancouver, bought over-ripe produce from under the counter at Granville Market, and occasionally picked fruit in Richmond to make a few bucks. On one such occasion his beater car ran out of gas and he had to gather empty cans to get enough gas money for the return trip. Far from being daunted by this state of affairs, he seemed to embrace the new sense of adventure in his life, and in his own quiet way I think he enjoyed thumbing his nose at the lifestyle he'd left behind.

Allan was always brilliant at building new businesses out of nothing. Not long after the pop can episode, he began searching for lost gold on sunken Spanish galleons. The venture grew into a small corporation with half a million dollars in investment. While gold was located on some of the galleons and arrangements were made with various governments to retrieve it, it didn't matter in the end that the gold was never brought to the surface; Allan had lost interest by this time, and his searching took him in new directions.

While living with his new partner, artist Ursula Medley (who'd been painting murals of Spanish galleons when they met), Allan started a house painting company. I don't know how much painting experience he had, but it didn't matter; he had a good understanding of human nature. He knew that the well-heeled folks

of West Vancouver wanted the best painting job money could buy, so he charged a premium and was never wanting for customers. The painting business served him well for some years, but Allan soon moved on to marketing for Hollyhock on Cortez Island. Here was the centre of the universe for people searching for meaning in life, and Allan met a new large circle of interesting and esoteric friends.



While still involved with Hollyhock, Allan helped the Glen Valley Organic Farm Cooperative draw more shareholders and he eventually moved to the farm. Now he found something he could really sink his teeth into: a return to the rich soils and peaceful rhythms of his childhood. With three new grandchildren, Jonathan, Melissa and Katie on the scene, Grandpa Al encouraged a no-holds-barred adventure on the farm. Collecting eggs from the chickens, trying to ride ornery minia-

ture horses and watching Grandpa Al and Farmer John turn loose a huge bullfrog in the living room were all part of a typical farm visit.

On one such visit, Allan's mother Lila came out from Saskatchewan to see her son back on the farm. Allan had been baking pies from apples that had fallen from the trees, and with four generations in the house, Lila imparted some of her famous prairie-tested recipes and baking techniques. It was only a few weeks later that Allan announced he'd rented a storefront on West Fourth Avenue and was opening a pie shop. Aphrodite's rose from the seas of a somewhat ramshackle space into the warm and inviting natural extension of the farm that it is today.

From the moment Aphrodite's opened, I knew Allan had found, or rather created, that sense of meaning he'd been searching for. You could see it in his warm smile when offering up one of his pies, in the extended hugs he liberally offered to his many friends who began to frequent the place, in the family-like atmosphere of the staff, and in the way Aphrodite's had become a natural extension of himself.

If the arc of a life can draw a full circle, Allan followed it all the way around to the beginning—he reached back to his farm roots, and from that rich soil offered a bounty for all in the city to enjoy. His spirit lives on at Aphrodite's, where his daughter Peggy and son Derrick will continue the tradition he began.

Editor note: The following poem was Allan's final homage. Chalked on the daily menu board at Aphrodite's restaurant, it is wisdom to live by ... be the love you want to see in the world.

If God
Invited you to a party
And said

"Everyone
In the ballroom tonight
Will be my special
Guest,"

How would you then treat them
When you
Arrived?

Indeed, indeed!

And Hafiz knows
There is no one in this world

Who
Is not upon
His Jeweled Dance
Floor.

- HAFIZ -



Lasagna Gardening

ON THE GARDEN PATH Carolyn Herriot

I have been inspired to try a new method of growing food called "Lasagna Gardening." This method has been tried and found true by gardener Patricia Lanza, who has written a book about it. It sounds too good to be true – a method that produces prolific harvests in no time, requires no digging or tilling, no sod removal or weeding, recycles free organic materials, feeds plants as they grow and even cuts down on watering!

It supports the theory that the secret to success is growing the soil before growing the food.

It starts from the ground up, building layers of different organic materials to create a bed, just like making a lasagna.

No digging is required, so there's no excuse not to grow some healthy food this year! Initially you need to wheelbarrow loads of materials to build the bed, but after that additional layers can go on as they become available. This way the garden is always being fed with soil building amendments. Your role to begin is simply to stockpile ingredients to build the garden, using anything that is uncon-

No digging is required, so there's no excuse not to grow some healthy food this year!

taminated and biodegradable. It's up to you whether you contain the garden with boards/rocks or not.

Eleven or more hours of sunlight is perfect for most food plants. Seven hours is possible for cool-weather plants, but less than four is impossible. It works even if there is a lawn in place. If so, start by cutting the grass as short as possible. Ideally the finished bed should be approximately 30 centimetres in height. Simply follow these guidelines:

- Decide on where the garden is to go and add dolomite lime to the area to neutralize the pH.
- Add a layer of animal manure, which can be fresh, for a heavy nitrogen kick.
- Lay sections of newspaper or layers of plain cardboard (not coloured) over the entire area so that the edges overlap.
- Add a thick layer of coir (coconut peat), a good moisture retentive substitute for peat, or leaf mulch if available.
- Add a layer of ready compost or



garden soil. Adding a dusting of granular organic fertilizer as you build the layers is also an option.

- Add a layer of grass clippings or spoiled hay.
- Add another layer of coir/leaf mulch.
- Finish with a good layer of compost or garden soil for planting in.

You are now ready to plant. You can direct seed if the weather is obliging or transplant directly into the top layer of the bed. The high fertility of the growing medium means it's possible to plant in close rows or blocks so that overlapping leaves keep weeds at bay and lock moisture in around the roots.

Layers of organic matter will constantly be breaking down, releasing nutrients to plants as they need them. This means fewer problems with pests and diseases that attack plants grown in poorer soils. Organic matter also locks in moisture, which means you can cut back on watering. If weeds appear, simply add another layer of mulch to smother them.

Happy Lasagna Gardening!

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The nature of compassion

THE POWER OF NOW Eckhart Tolle

SPIRITUALITY

You may have heard the phrase "turn the other cheek," which a great teacher of enlightenment used two thousand years ago. He was attempting to convey symbolically the secret of nonresistance and nonreaction. In this statement, as in all his others, he was concerned only with your inner reality, not with the outer conduct of your life.

Having gone beyond the mind-made opposites, you become like a deep lake. The outer situation of your life and whatever happens there is the surface of the lake. Sometimes calm, sometimes windy and rough, according to the cycles and seasons. Deep down, however, the lake is always undisturbed. You are the whole lake, not just the surface, and you are in touch with your own depth, which remains absolutely still. You don't resist change by mentally clinging to any situation. Your inner peace does not depend on it. You abide in Being — unchanging, timeless, deathless — and you are no longer dependent for fulfillment or happiness on the outer world of constantly

as a physical body, you share the vulnerability and mortality of your physical form with every other human and with every living being. Next time you say, "I have nothing in common with this person," remember that you have a great deal in common: A few years from now — two years or seventy years, it doesn't make much difference — both of you will have become rotting corpses, then piles of dust, then nothing at all. This is a sobering and humbling realization that leaves little room for pride. Is this a negative thought? No, it is a fact. Why close your eyes to it? In that sense, there is total equality between you and every other creature.

One of the most powerful spiritual practices is to meditate deeply on the mortality of physical forms, including your own. This is called: Die before you die. Go into it deeply. Your physical form is dissolving, is no more. Then a moment comes when all mind-forms or thoughts also die. Yet you are still there — the divine presence that you

One of the most powerful spiritual practices is to meditate deeply on the mortality of physical forms.

fluctuating forms. You can enjoy them, play with them, create new forms, appreciate the beauty of it all. But there will be no need to attach yourself to any of it.

As long as you are unaware of Being, the reality of other humans will elude you, because you have not found your own. Your mind will like or dislike their form, which is not just their body but includes their mind as well. True relationship becomes possible only when there is an awareness of Being. Coming from Being, you will perceive another person's body and mind as just a screen, as it were, behind which you can feel their true reality, as you feel yours. At the level of Being, all suffering is recognized as an illusion. Suffering is due to identification with form. Miracles of healing sometimes occur through this realization, by awakening Being-consciousness in others — if they are ready.

Compassion is the awareness of a deep bond between yourself and all creatures. But there are two sides to compassion, two sides to this bond. On the one hand, since you are still here

are. Radiant, fully awake. Nothing that was real ever died, only names, forms, and illusions.

The realization of this deathless dimension, your true nature, is the other side of compassion. On a deep feeling-level, you now recognize not only your own immortality but through your own that of every other creature as well. On the level of form, you share mortality and the precariousness of existence. On the level of Being, you share eternal, radiant life. These are the two aspects of compassion. To have deep empathy for the suffering of another being certainly requires a high degree of consciousness but represents only one side of compassion. It is not complete. True compassion goes beyond empathy or sympathy. It does not happen until sadness merges with joy, the joy of Being beyond form, the joy of eternal life.

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Transcending time

UNIVERSE WITHIN Gwen Randall-Young

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. – Henry David Thoreau

It has been said that truth lies at the heart of the paradox. This may offer some consolation to those who are trying to follow the seemingly contradictory imperatives to both be in the moment and to transcend the here and now.

Being truly in the moment can lead to that very transcendence. It may be like going through a black hole of nothingness only to discover a profound somethingness on the other side. Both are part of the same continuum; it is only the mind that separates and hence it is the mind that needs transcending. Think about transcending space and time.

We don't literally move beyond space. We move beyond our concept-

will be buoyed up by some mysterious force.

We don't always see the support that is here for us, inherent in our perfect Universe. Soul takes flight within the human form when we stop holding on to that edge of three-dimensional consciousness. The reason that this kind of letting go may be so difficult is because it is like a little death.

Babies have a natural fear of falling, and physical beings at first have a natural fear of surrendering. Just as babies grow up and may learn to delight in jumping from airplanes, so physical beings can learn to delight in the art of voluntary surrender. Each time we surrender, there is a release, and we die to an old way of being. Like the Braxton-Hicks contractions of pregnancy, these little deaths prepare us for the ultimate letting go.

The soul, like a parent at the side of

We are like a child poised at the edge of the swimming pool, one part wanting to dive in, and another unwilling to let go of the solid ground.

alization of space. Time doesn't stand still. We take ourselves out of time when we become lost in our present experience. Two vehicles that are moving very quickly down the road, traveling at the same speed, would appear to be standing still if they were side by side. It is the scenery which appears to be rushing by.

When we eliminate the boundaries of the mind, we enter the zone where the now and the eternal are one. Once we find the plateau of peace, we may choose to go there more often.

The irony is that in order to be there, we must be willing to let go of all attachments, especially the attachment of holding on! We are like a child poised at the edge of the swimming pool, one part wanting to dive in, and another unwilling to let go of the solid ground. You cannot immerse yourself in the water while keeping one foot on the shore. Once comfortable in both realms, one may go back and forth at will. In making the shift from land to water, we must orient the physical body in a completely different way.

We must surrender to a new kind of balance. In the same way that we trust the buoyancy of the water to support us, so in transcendence we trust that we

the pool, urges us to take the leap, to jump in and experience a different way of being. There is nothing to fear. As we learn to move effortlessly back and forth, the prospect of our own death is no longer frightening. Instead we can think of it as a kind of cosmic retirement.

Experiencing the transcendent state is something everyone can do. Using drugs for this purpose is like replacing fresh flowers with plastic ones. If you fill your garden with imitation flowers, you may never make the effort to plant real ones.

The deep joy, the purity, the integrity and satisfaction of learning to release our souls naturally cannot be duplicated by altering the body chemistry. You can drive your car in a marathon while others are running, and you will reach the finish line faster than everyone else, but you will never understand the experience of those who completed it one step at a time.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and the author of Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution. For articles and information about her books and the "Deep Powerful Change" personal growth/hypnosis CDs, go to www.gwen.ca.

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Learning Earth's rules

EARTHFUTURE Guy Dauncey

ENVIRONMENT

There is something wonderfully zestful about most two-year-olds. For the first year of their life, they have been cuddled, indulged, loved, fed, washed, diapered and generally been the centre of their parents' attention. Quite reasonably, they expect life to continue this way. This is the world of YES. There is only one rule, which says you get everything you want.

But then they enter the world of NO. Put that down! Stop hitting your brother! No, you *can't* have those sweeties. I *mean* it! New rules are appearing everywhere.

The child's instinctive response is to push back. Life was far better with just one rule, so let's keep it that way. If the parents have their wits about them, they will resist. This might lead to some screaming, foot-stomping tantrums, but far better this than a child who grows up to believe it can get its own way with-

until there is just one per cent left? What use will a tantrum be when there are none left at all?

The story is the same whether we look up to the atmosphere, down into the landfills or inwards to our own bodies. The average newborn baby has 230 toxic chemicals in its blood, 190 of which have been linked to cancer. On some primitive level, we still believe that Mama will give us a kiss, clean up the mess and make it all better again.

We've become terrible two-year-olds and we throw a tantrum each time we don't get what we want because the old days were much better and we don't want to submit to the household rules – the rules of ecology. The word "ecology" comes from the Greek *oikos* (meaning "household" or "family") and *logos*

Every would-be teacher, engineer, architect, company director, CEO or candidate for public office should be obliged to take a mandatory ecoliteracy test.

out accepting the household rules. If you doubt any of this, watch *Supernanny* on TV. It is only when the child begins to accept the household rules that peace and sanity prevail.

Now think about us humans in our home, Planet Earth. For most of our evolutionary existence, we have behaved like one-year-olds. We wanted the fish? We just went out and grabbed them – the bigger the boat, the better. Want the forest? Clearcut away! Need topsoil for farming? Just roll out the tractors. Wetlands to drain for housing? Send in the engineers.

We've behaved like a one-year-old with our wastes, too. The ocean, the rivers, a hole in the ground, the atmosphere – who cares? Let Mama clean up the mess. That's not our responsibility.

Things *change*, however – and now look at the mess we're in. We're still grabbing, pushing, and dumping our wastes, but there's precious little left to grab. If everyone on Earth grabbed as much as we do here in the west wing, we'd need three additional planets.

Ninety per cent of the large fish in the ocean – the tuna, cod, sharks, marlin, swordfish, halibut – are gone, grabbed by humans in just the last 50 years, and the remaining 10 per cent are rapidly heading the same way. When will we stop demanding more fish? Will we wait

("study" or "rationality"), meaning "rational household behaviour."

Earth's household rules – what could be more straightforward? Clean up your mess. Put things back where they belong. Share. Don't grab what isn't yours. Sit together at the dining table and talk.

We have political, corporate and religious leaders who don't know what the carbon cycle is.

We have graduating MBA students who don't know how an oldgrowth forest works. We have schoolteachers who don't know how the pollution from pesticides and household cleaners enters their students' bodies.

It is urgently necessary that we pause and learn Earth's household rules.

Every would-be teacher, engineer, architect, CEO or candidate for public office should be obliged to take a mandatory ecoliteracy test and not be allowed to progress until they pass. We do it for driving because we accept that unsafe drivers are a public hazard. How much more of a hazard are our planetary leaders if they don't know Earth's household rules?

Guy Dauncey is an author, speaker, and editor of EcoNews, a free monthly newsletter you can sign up for at www.earthfuture.com.

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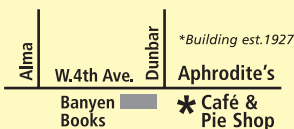
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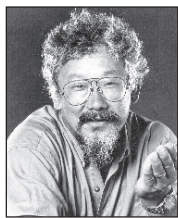


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Bearing down on grizzlies

SCIENCE MATTERS David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

Years ago, I was surprised to learn that a grizzly bear is protected in the United States, but if it walks across the border into British Columbia, it can be killed for sport. So we did a program on them for *The Nature of Things*. I was amazed to see pictures from the 1800s of immense piles of skulls from

management. This is the idea that when potential risks exist, it's better to be safe than sorry. In other words, if we suspect that grizzly populations are imperiled, we should stop killing them, even if we aren't yet 100 per cent certain about the existing population size or rate of decline.

Some might ask why we should pro-

British Columbia is unique in that grizzlies still inhabit much of the province, even though they have been eliminated from almost all of their historical territory across the planet.

grizzlies that were slaughtered to make room for early settlers on the prairies. Grizzlies were not just mountain animals; they flourished on bison all the way across Canada to Manitoba and south to Texas and California (where the only place you'll find one now is on the state flag)! Grizzlies need space – tagged animals have been known to travel over hundreds of kilometres in a season. But the cumulative impacts of habitat loss and fragmentation from logging, mining, road building, urbanization and other land-use pressures have forced them into isolated patches of territory.

The U.S. Endangered Species Act lists the grizzly as “threatened,” meaning it is in danger of becoming extinct. Grizzly bears in Canada are ranked as “special concern” by Canada’s scientific committee on species at risk (the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, or COSEWIC) but remain legally unprotected. In the absence of legal protection, they continue to be hunted unsustainably in B.C. Government statistics show that 430 grizzlies were killed in the province in 2007, and close to 11,000 have been killed since 1975.

Last year’s kill in B.C. was a record, something we only found out when environmental groups, including the David Suzuki Foundation, were able to pry the information from the government. Most of the bears – about 88 per cent – were killed for sport. The rest were killed by poachers and animal-control officers.

The B.C. government argues that the grizzly hunt is sustainable, but the methods by which it estimates the numbers of bears are imprecise. In fact, many leading bear biologists say the B.C. government’s numbers – about 17,000 grizzlies – are high and that the number may be as low as 6,000. When scientists and researchers are unable to determine accurate population numbers, they often rely on the precautionary principle to ensure sustainable

management. This is the idea that when potential risks exist, it's better to be safe than sorry. In other words, if we suspect that grizzly populations are imperiled, we should stop killing them, even if we aren't yet 100 per cent certain about the existing population size or rate of decline. Some might ask why we should protect the grizzly. After all, it's a large, dangerous animal that has been known to kill humans and livestock. But the dangers are exaggerated: grizzlies tend to be more afraid of than threatening to people, and their impact on livestock is minimal. More importantly, grizzlies are essential components of the ecosystems where they live. They help to disperse seeds and nutrients throughout the forest, and because they eat both plants and animals, they have a significant “top-down” influence on the food web. When salmon are spawning, grizzlies carry the fish into the forests to eat them, leaving much of the carcass behind. Those salmon remains feed many other birds, mammals, invertebrates, and microorganisms, and the nutrients in the rotting carcasses fertilize the surrounding trees. It's a marvelous story of interconnections and interdependence.

The B.C. government has made some progress in grizzly conservation by setting aside some of its habitat, including the Great Bear Rainforest, as protected areas. But even there, trophy hunting is allowed, and many of the parks and protected areas are likely too small and isolated to maintain the grizzlies’ long-term survival. For this reason, the way we manage the rest of its territory is critical. As a start, the B.C. government must suspend the controversial grizzly hunt, as Alberta recently did, and must continue to protect large areas of grizzly habitat from resource development, roads and other human pressures. British Columbia is unique in that grizzlies still inhabit much of the province, even though they have been eliminated from almost all of their historical territory across the planet. That means we have a global responsibility to protect this iconic carnivore.

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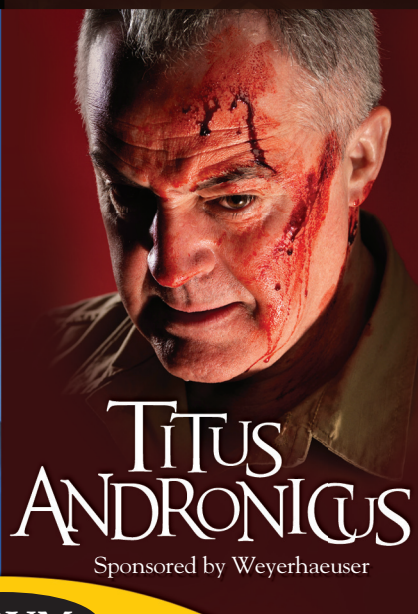
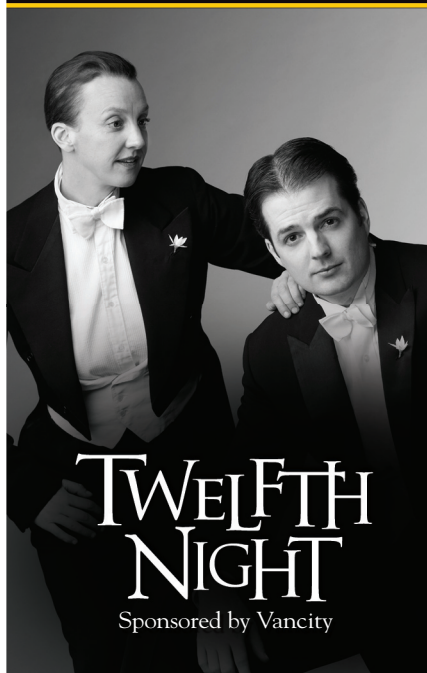
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Revenge... an unbreakable cycle?

Kim Collier, Artistic Producer of Vancouver's edgy and innovative Electric Company Theatre Company, has been given the challenge of directing Shakespeare's bloody revenge drama *Titus Andronicus* for this summer's Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival. It is a brutal story, where a merciless, ritual sacrifice triggers a mother's vengeance, leading to a spiral of bloody deeds - the ravaging and mutilation of Titus's daughter, the murder of Titus's sons, and the self-amputation of his own hand.

When asked about his decision to include *Titus* in the 2008 season, Artistic Director Christopher Gaze responded, "A savage and doom-filled tale, *Titus Andronicus* was the sort of work that was

we all have within us the potential to participate in these dread deeds and, if we do, what does it take to trigger these forces?"

Kim believes that in the play it all begins with the individual's loss of power and identity when one country dominates another, and with the humiliation that follows for the dominated people. "The revenge is driven initially by Tamora - a mother's primal response to the loss of her daughter in a ritual sacrifice. Her deep-rooted love for her child propels a relentless need to revenge. Titus, although a great leader experienced in war, death and tragedy, is eventually pushed so far that his morality breaks and he too takes revenge to the limit."

"Brilliantly, Shakespeare lets us view revenge across generations," Kim con-

The play offers the chance to examine the environmental, social, national or personal structures that help or hinder an individual's ability to act with either mercy or revenge.

popular with audiences when Shakespeare was beginning his play writing career and it was a nod to his contemporaries. However, with its vile savagery, the play is extremely relevant to our times and today's reality, echoing man's continued inhumanity to man around the world."

Director Kim Collier also felt the contemporary pull of this early Shakespeare tragedy. "When I first read the play, I was surprised how completely modern it felt to me in its content and how the themes of revenge were reflected in current global events - from the ethnic violence that has shaken our view of humanity, the rise of suicide bombings, and, more locally, the deaths caused by gang violence, school shootings and fractured families. We live on the periphery of violence and *Titus Andronicus* shows us the almost unthinkable alternative to our own tenuously civilized society."

After the shock of the material had settled, Kim saw how the truth expressed in this script provides an incredible challenge to explore the darker side of humanity. "While the material is sometimes disturbing, it is also painfully relevant."

"For me, this play offers us the chance to examine the environmental, social, national or personal structures that help or hinder an individual's ability to act with either mercy or revenge. What happens within a person that makes it possible to initiate brutality or murder or rape? Do

tinues. "Titus's grandson, Young Lucius, begins as an onlooker with a naive view of heroism and war, is then thrown into the centre of the action participating with his grandfather trying to navigate the enemy through threats, and finally is shocked and disillusioned as he witnesses the murders committed by his father and grandfather. Eventually he withdraws, relying only on his own moral compass for guidance. This moral centre allows him the simple heroic act of symbolically moving away from punishment and violence, to move away from the cycle of vengeance. There is hope that he will be different!"

"This investigation, of course, has me wondering if it is possible to break the endless cycle of revenge that has existed throughout history, or, more provocatively, to consider if there is in fact a place for revenge in society?" Kim concludes. "I hope the audience will leave the theatre asking themselves those moral questions, and will be meditating on our current global events."

Titus Andronicus runs July 9 to September 19 under the tents in Vanier Park. Also on stage this summer at Bard on the Beach are the comedy Twelfth Night, the sweeping tragedy King Lear, and the magical romance The Tempest. For tickets and information check www.bardonthebeach.org or call 604-739-0559.

CONVERSATION WITH JACK LAYTON

by Joseph Roberts

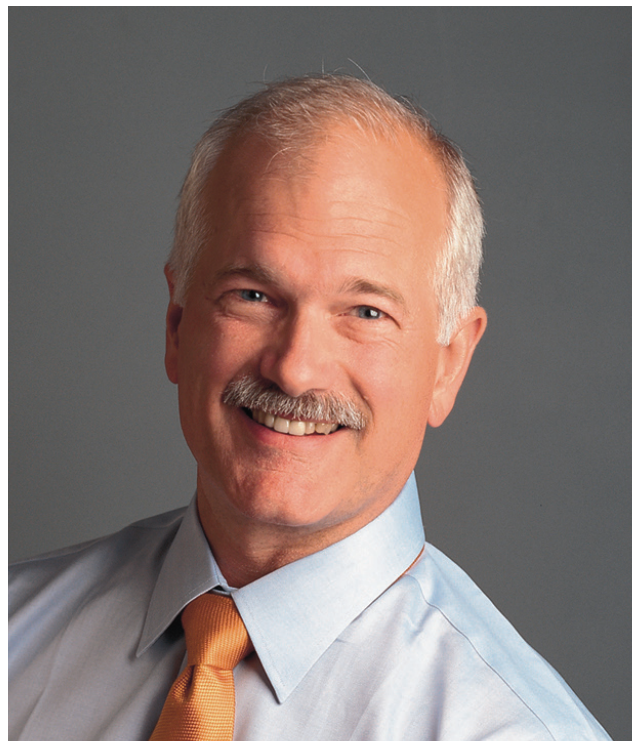
Joseph Roberts: How can Canadians be healthier? What can the government do to improve the services that are offered so they prevent illness in the first place and be taken better when they do get sick?

Jack Layton: We have to start by protecting the planet from the pollution that we produce, including CO₂, among other noxious substances. I spent six years chairing the Board of Health in Toronto and it always struck me that we spent less than one cent of the total of each health dollar on prevention, on health promotion to help people avoid disease in the first place. We spend 99.9 cents fixing up the diseases that have already happened. It seems to me it's totally wrong in terms of the proportion of investment.

Starting out with very early investment in children and their health and nutrition in those early stages has huge benefits later on. We're pushing very hard for a national strategy around making sure that all kids get decent food from the earliest stages and for a good early childhood care program across the country.

Then there's no question that medications are becoming more and more an important part of people's care. As we've seen in some of the analyses, there's sometimes too much medication and the costs are devastating. So you end up with people who can't afford their medication and end up taking it wrongly as a result. We hear stories about people who say they can only afford half the medication - especially seniors find themselves in situations where they're trying to make ends meet. So there they are cutting the pills in half figuring maybe it'll stretch for two months, but it is actually harming them to make that change.

JR: Currently it seems the federal government is pretty much in the pockets of the big drug companies. When it comes to the natural food industry and health products, it's as if the federal government thinks that's all just snake oil and that Big Pharma can do no wrong. There's no dead bodies from echinacea, chamomile or Vitamin C, but there's a lot of dead bodies from, for example, the anti-depressants that were approved by the government. Vioxx and celebrex have killed tens of thousands of people yet there still seems to be this old-fashioned outlook of giving the natural products a really hard time right now. Instead of looking at serving Canadians, they're just talking about how to protect drug company interests. They're now asking for testing on rosehips and things like that which people have been taking for thousands for



years with a lot of evidence showing how helpful they are. People are concerned that the new Natural Health Protectorate is actually going to be harming people because they don't really know what they're doing and they're working from a drug model rather than a third category model or natural health product model. Have you had a chance to support any of those initiatives?

JL: Sure. Our party was in the forefront when they were wanting to take moves back in 1997 which would have resulted in, for example, a lot of the Chinese herb and medicine stores having to go out of business. We organized petitions and campaigns across the country to support that sector. There's no question we want some testing done. I don't want to be taking some natural product that's been laced with pesticide somewhere, so of course we need to be balancing the interest of the public which is expecting somebody to test products.

Of course, as different alternative therapies become more and more popular we're actually seeing the big pharmaceutical companies moving more and more into some of these areas. So that's one of the dynamics that's underway.

But I think that what should concern everybody is that when your doctor tells you that you need a medication and maybe sends you home from hospital or is counting on you using that particular product, be it alternative or more conventional pharmaceutical, if you can't afford it then you're not really having access in a fair and equal way in our society to the health care that you need.

So we believe, as Tommy Douglas

always talked about, in the extension of Medicare to pharmaceuticals because right now one in ten prescriptions are not even being filled. We know people can't even afford many of the natural products that they're taking on the advice of their experts. We need to work to make health care accessible to everybody.

JR: What got you involved in politics?

JL: Lots of different things. I talk about this in my book, *Speaking Out Louder*. My great-grandfather was a great inspiration to me. He was a blind immigrant to Canada. He'd applied for a job as an organist and when he got here they turned him down when they found out he was blind. So he began to organize a campaign for a basic pension for people who had disabilities, which I always thought was an inspirational objective and vision.

Then my parents got me involved as a young person in different issues. There was a little church youth group which would go down and work with the homelessness, making sandwiches and that kind of thing. When you're age 13 and 14 that has a real impression on you and it struck me very wrong that some people being unable to have the basics in such a rich society.

Of course, I ran into Tommy Douglas, like many of us were fortunate enough to do, and he was standing up against the War Measures Act in Quebec. That was a very worrisome, scary time, yet there he was saying the Act was wrong and that terrorists would win if we gave up our freedoms.

JR: Sounds familiar today too.

JL: It certainly does.

JR: I think there's a huge desire among Canadians to have a more peaceful world, yet it seems like we're being dragged along by the current government to participate more and more. Where would you see Canada in its foreign policy in regards to Afghanistan and Iraq?

JL: Right now the Canadian government is going in the wrong direction, rapidly, when it comes to foreign

policy as regards to the pursuit of war, fighting as opposed to peace-building. We can see examples of this, whether it's the decision to prolong the engagement in Afghanistan, now working with even more and more American soldiers coming in and we know their style and approach has not been one that Canadians would have wanted to promote.

Unfortunately the Liberals decided to support that extension, so now we're there for three more years, and a pact towards peace and the use of the United Nations to really be that civilian-led peace-building process with all its complexities is being pushed aside in favour of a military approach.

I have a feeling we'll be back at this two years from now still talking about whether there will be a further extension and we'll be having the same debates. I think a majority of Canadians want Canada to be a voice for peace and they want our actions to reflect that. Right now we're allowing the sale of a company that we all invested in as Canadians to produce satellites, RADARSAT. It's important for the missile defense system of the US, the weaponization of space that Canadians opposed, and yet we're letting this be sold to Americans even though Canadian tax dollars went into it. This means we're going to be part of the weaponization of space in a tacit sort of way. That's why we're fighting against these initiatives from the Stephen Harper government.

JR: We can't have a healthy people or environment unless we have a healthy government. In BC we had a referendum on the single transferable vote. What do you see could be done to make democracy function better in terms of involving people more? Is there any form you would prefer?

JL: Well, first of all we have to find a way to get to proportional representation so that every vote counts. The question is what's the best way to get there. It's been unfortunate. There've been a number of referendums now and they haven't been able to get over the thresholds that were set, which in my view were somewhat arbitrarily high, but nonetheless we've got to bring proportional representation into Canada one way or the other. We also have to abolish the unelected Senate. There's no way a group of unelected, appointed people should be passing laws. That's something from two centuries ago that we should be abandoning as quickly as possible.

JR: Thank you so much for your time today.

JL: Sorry we don't have longer, but call and we can always talk over the phone if you have any other questions.



Robert Kennedy

It was
40
years
ago
today

The speech that Senator Robert F. Kennedy gave in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. will live in infamy. On the day King was killed, Kennedy was campaigning for the presidency in Indianapolis, Indiana and was on his way to a campaign rally in a predominantly black section of the city when he heard the news. His aides strongly urged him not to attend the rally, fearing his life would be in danger. But Kennedy insisted, and he stood upon the back of a flatbed truck to give the following extemporaneous eulogy. Less than two months later, on June 6, 1968, Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles. He left behind his wife Ethel and their 11 children. Let's pray Barack Obama will be better protected.

"This is a time of shame and sorrow. It is not a day for politics. I have saved this one opportunity, my only event of today, to speak briefly to you about the mindless menace of violence in America which again stains our land and every one of our lives.

It is not the concern of any one race. The victims of the violence are black and white, rich and poor, young and old, famous and unknown. They are, most important of all, human beings whom other human beings loved and needed. No one - no matter where he lives or what he does - can be certain who will suffer from some senseless act of bloodshed. And yet it goes on and on and on in this country of ours.

Why? What has violence ever accomplished? What has it ever created? No martyr's cause has ever been stilled by an assassin's bullet.

No wrongs have ever been righted by riots and civil disorders. A sniper is only a coward, not a hero; and an uncontrolled, uncontrollable mob is only the voice of madness, not the voice of reason.

Whenever any American's life is taken by another American unnecessarily - whether it is done in the name of the law or in the defiance of the law, by one man or a gang, in cold blood or in passion, in an attack of violence or in response to violence - whenever we tear at the fabric of the life which another man has painfully and clumsily woven for himself and his children, the whole nation is degraded.

"Among free men," said Abraham Lincoln, "there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet; and those who take such appeal are sure to lose their cause and pay the costs."

Yet we seemingly tolerate a rising level of violence that ignores our common humanity and our claims to civilization alike. We calmly accept newspaper reports of civilian slaughter in far-off lands. We glorify killing on movie and television screens and call it entertainment. We make it easy for men of all shades of sanity to acquire whatever weapons and ammunition they desire.

Too often we honor swagger and bluster and wielders of force; too often we excuse those who are willing to build their own lives on the shattered dreams of others. Some Americans who preach non-violence abroad fail to practice it here at home. Some who accuse others of inciting riots have by their own conduct invited them.

Some look for scapegoats, others look for conspiracies, but this much is clear: violence breeds violence, repression brings retaliation, and only a cleansing of our whole society can remove this sickness from our soul.

For there is another kind of violence, slower but just as deadly destructive as the shot or the bomb in the night. This is the violence of institutions; indifference and inaction and slow decay. This is the violence that afflicts

the poor, that poisons relations between men because their skin has different colors. This is the slow destruction of a child by hunger, and schools without books and homes without heat in the winter.

This is the breaking of a man's spirit by denying him the chance to stand as a father and as a man among other men. And this too afflicts us all.

I have not come here to propose a set of specific remedies nor is there a single set. For a broad and adequate outline we know what must be done. When you teach a man to hate and fear his brother, when you teach that he is a lesser man because of his color or his beliefs or the policies he pursues, when you teach that those who differ from you threaten your freedom or your job or your family, then you also learn to confront others not as fellow citizens but as enemies, to be met not with cooperation but with conquest; to be subjugated and mastered.

We learn, at the last, to look at our brothers as aliens, men with whom we share a city, but not a community; men bound to us in common dwelling, but not in common effort. We learn to share only a common fear, only a common desire to retreat from each other, only a common impulse to meet disagreement with force. For all this, there are no final answers.

Yet we know what we must do. It is to achieve true justice among our fellow citizens. The question is not what programs we should seek to enact. The question is whether we can find in our own midst and in our own hearts that leadership of humane purpose that will recognize the terrible truths of our existence.

We must admit the vanity of our false distinctions among men and learn to find our own advancement in the search for the advancement of others. We must admit in ourselves that our own children's future cannot be built on the misfortunes of others. We must recognize that this short life can neither be ennobled or enriched by hatred or revenge.

Our lives on this planet are too short and the work to be done too great to let this spirit flourish any longer in our land. Of course we cannot vanquish it with a program, nor with a resolution.

But we can perhaps remember, if only for a time, that those who live with us are our brothers, that they share with us the same short moment of life; that they seek, as do we, nothing but the chance to live out their lives in purpose and in happiness, winning what satisfaction and fulfillment they can.

Surely, this bond of common faith, this bond of common goal, can begin to teach us something. Surely, we can learn, at least, to look at those around us as fellow men, and surely we can begin to work a little harder to bind up the wounds among us and to become in our own hearts brothers and countrymen once again."

(April 5, 1968)

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I thought of that while riding my bike.
– Albert Einstein



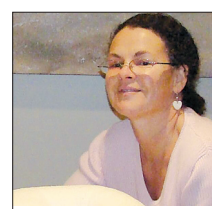
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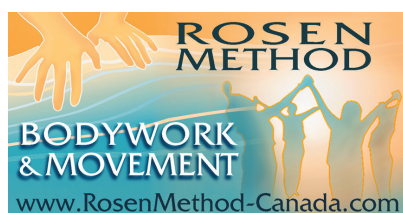
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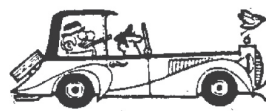
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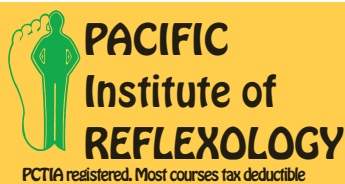
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When I see an adult on the bicycle, I do not despair for the future of the human race.
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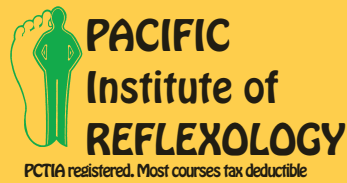


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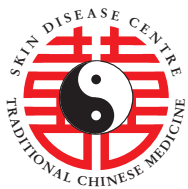
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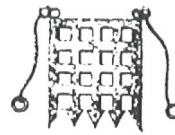
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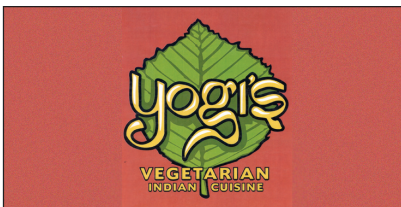
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...Hurtig from p. 13

of your book, when you released documents leaked to you on the secret meeting in Banff in mid-September of 2006. It appears there's a covert agenda to remake Canada in the image of the US, and our press has been pretty much complicit in the process, if only through silence.

MH: That's what these guys want. They're having secret meetings across Canada, across the United States. They've even been condemned by a number of Americans in the House of Representatives and they're moving toward integration in whole bunch of different ways, in a system that will be irreversible if we let them go ahead with it.

We're talking about the future of our country here; we're talking about something incredibly important. I managed to get my hands on some documents about these secret meetings. I released them to almost all the media in the country and they ignored it. In those meeting were people like former American Secretaries of State, people like Peter Lougheed, the former Premier of Alberta, former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, etc. etc. and big business from Canada and the United States. And the media treated this as a nonexistent story. And that is bizarre. It's unconscionable that the media wouldn't report this information when it was handed to them.

CULTURE

Change is coming...again

THIRTY SOMETHING Ishi Dinim



In my life I've heard and will probably hear again those axioms: "Knowledge is power." and "Ignorance is bliss." Almost every morning the familiar voices from CBC rouse me from my slumber and I ponder those two clichéd statements. Calamity upon calamity, sorrow upon sorrow - I wonder whether the information I'm exposing myself to is empowering or if I'd be happier unaware.

There is that space of not knowing which contains wonder and a possibility for growth. My glass of water, my food, my thoughts - where do these things come from before we met and where will they go after we part? How do I know something? Did I hear it, read it, a film, the internet, was it from experience or my gut? I'm not trying to question everything that I know, because there are some things that you just know, you know?

Last night my wife, Catherine, was falling asleep and sad about some news a friend gave us. As I held her she said,

"I don't want things to change." I knew what she meant in relation to the specific situation but it felt like such a general and weighted declaration. I responded affirmatively, "Yes you do baby, change is wonderful. It's how we learn and it's happening all the time." We held together close and talked about the world until we were too tired.

I had this thought that the places we look for knowledge are kind of like eating a balanced diet. What diversity of sources and perspectives and media and experiences are we involved with and are they sustaining continued learning? Did I have too much basketball on TV, Burma on the radio, China in the paper, animation on the net, and not enough gardening in the dirt, Genghis on paper-back, or conversations over tea?

I'm turning 30 and I'm having a good laugh at myself about where I thought I would or should be at this point. Expectation, anticipation, and faith are all at play. Some amazing and unexpected

things have happened along the way. My plans have been completed, changed and some left in the dust. My future plans will integrate a growing awareness that doing what I can in spite of the troubles and because of the troubles in the world is enough.

As I get a little older, one moment at a time, I think more about my place in a greater continuum, elders passing and children coming. There are parts of my childhood still very much with me. I also feel as if the person I want to become is showing himself each day. May the next thirty be filled with as much love and creativity as the first. We're all just trying to figure it out as we go along.

Ishi graduated from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2001, with a BFA major in photography. He makes films, collects cacti and ponders many things. Currently he is doing what he can for himself and the planet. contactishi@yahoo.ca.

Bust a move

FILMS WORTH WATCHING Robert Alstead

When I first heard about the breakdancing documentary *Planet B-Boy* around a year ago, I remember dismissing it as the kind of specialist movie that wouldn't be of interest to me. Didn't breakdancing go out in the eighties?

Not quite. Yes, *Planet B-Boy* (playing until June 5 at Cinemark Tinseltown) is packed with wall-to-wall breakdancing, which is sure to attract aficionados of b-boy culture. But the documentary also does a great job of showing how this dance scene has developed, largely out of the mainstream eye, into a spectacular artform that combines creativity, physical power and finesse. I couldn't help but be drawn in.

The film starts by telling us what went wrong. Older b-boys talk about how "embarrassing" breakdance became after it hit the mainstream and became a commercial affair. The mainstream grew weary of it, but b-boying continued to have a passionate following as an outlet for personal expression and self-discovery.

The story follows five top teams from Las Vegas, Paris, Osaka, Seoul and even rural South as they prepare for the major b-boy international competition, the Battle of the Year. We learn that different countries are renowned for their particular styles – the French for the beauty of their moves, the reigning champion Koreans for their power moves and technical brilliance (one can spin on his head seemingly for hours) while the Japanese are known for their supreme innovations.

There are also insights, through interviews with individual dancers and their parents, into the personal challenges each struggles with. For the Japanese and Korean squad leaders, the competition forms a landmark point in their relationships with their fathers. The French team, with 12-year-old, blonde-haired Lil' Kev providing some comic relief, want to raise the profile of Chelles, their largely immigrant commune just outside Paris. There are few females in the film as this is mostly a young male milieu, although a feisty grandmother briefly busts some moves on the floor.

This is the first documentary from Toronto-born filmmaker Benson Lee. He keeps it simple by focusing on the build-up to the competition while maintaining a light-hearted tone. The back story is stretched a little thin by trying to focus on so many people, but we learn enough about the characters to be emotionally invested in them as they prepare for the climactic dance-off against crews from 17 other nations in a little town in Germany.

The most memorable aspect of the film, of course, are the moves themselves, whether they be elaborately choreographed sequences involving all members of a crew or individual free-style moves. I found myself watching with a dropped jaw much of the time.

Carlos Reygadas' *Silent Light*, (showing June 5-12 at the Vancouver International Film Centre) is an unusual arthouse film about a love-triangle in a Mennonite farming community in Mexico. A devoted father and husband has a



Planet B-Boy

crisis of faith, when he becomes attracted to another woman. It has earned widespread critical acclaim for its ambition and beautiful imagery, although the two-hour film does move at a slow pace.

VIFC is also showing the intriguing drama *XXY* about a young Argentine hermaphrodite working out her sexuality and gender. The film, showing June 13-17, has been credited for its sensitive and clear-eyed handling of its emotional subject-matter. Both *Silent Light* and

XXY were award-winners at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival.

With June being Bike Month, it would be remiss of me not to mention that this year's bike-themed short films festival will screen on June 26 at the Ridge Theatre starting at 6.30pm. More details can be found at www.bikeshorts.ca.

Robert Alstead made the Vancouver-set documentary *You Never Bike Alone* (www.youneverbikealone.com)



Without regret

TEEN VIEW Cara Shu-Mei

While looking through some old pictures recently, I came across one of my grandmother, my mom and I: three generations of women. It started me thinking about how unique and dissimilar each of our lives has been. They grew up in a different time and country with different values and expectations. I was left with no small amount of awe at all of the memories and wisdom these two women have gained over time. What percentage of this have they passed on to me? How much is even possible to share? Sure, I've been told many stories, but how can an entire life's story be inserted into casual conversation?

How much would they even want me to know?

Imagine if there were somehow a machine that enabled us to witness others' experiences as if they were our own. If it were possible, I think that we all would be extremely frightened. I can't say that I would relish the idea of my own faults and regrets being laid out for examination. To be perfectly honest, nothing scares me more. This is predominantly because of the love-hate relationship I have with myself. What if everyone were repulsed?


Although I like to think that I generally govern myself by a strong set of ideals, I am often unsuccessful in doing

so. There are times when I lose control and do something that I am not proud of. It might be a cruel word to someone who doesn't deserve it, a secret not kept or even a deeper betrayal that is unknown except within my heart. These are among the many things that I am afraid to share with the outside world. But the more I think about it, isn't this cowardice in itself something to be ashamed of? I have chained it to me and allowed it to suffocate me. Wouldn't it feel good to have this weight lifted? Besides, what's to say that if others were given the ability to peer into my soul, they would condemn rather than accept? It is only my insecurities that are telling me they

would. Every person has virtues as well as faults, the former mostly outweighing the latter.

I've believed for quite some time that no matter how horrendous someone's actions might be, if you think about the possible reasons and emotions behind them, you might be able to understand; and once you understand, you can no longer be angry. It's possible that you might have done the same thing if you were in their situation. Now, if one could only apply that logic on oneself, it would be much easier to forgive and accept oneself. As a result, sharing memories of regret wouldn't be such a scary concept.

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EVENT CONTENTS

Saturday, August 9, 2008
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Free Shiatsu Demonstration
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Sunday, August 10, 2008
9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
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Datebook

Protect Natural Health Products JUNE 2
with Shawn Buckley, LLB. How government regulations affect consumer choices. June 2, 7-pm, St. Andrews Wesley Church, 1022 Nelson St. Tx \$5 at the door, or register online at www.hans.org/events/?event=nhp

JUN 2

Endangered Natural Health Products?

Shawn Buckley, LLB, presents a talk on how government regulations (Bill C-51 and C-52) affect consumer choices. 7 pm. St. Andrews Wesley Church, 1022 Nelson St. \$5 or free for HANS members.

No Laughing Matter: Adventure, Activism and Politics:

Author Margaret Mitchell reads from her memoir. 7 pm. at Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia St. Free.

JUN 4

National Clean Air Day & Commuter Challenge

Friendly competition between Canadian cities to see which one can cut its air pollution the most. www.cleanairday.com

Soul of the World: Unlocking the Secrets of Time.

Author Christopher Dewdney reads from his new book. 7 pm. at Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia St. Free.

JUN 6

No Gag! Demonstration against Canwest and its lawsuit against activist Mordecai Briemberg, featuring Marc Edge, author of Asper Nation: Canada's Most Dangerous Media Company. www.seriouslyfreespeech.ca. Noon at Granville Square (in front of the Vancouver Sun building)

JUN 6

The People's Voices - Singing the Revolution

Musical fundraiser the War Resisters Support Campaign. 7 pm. Vancouver Unitarian Church.. \$25/\$10. 778-837-1475 or vanresisters@yahoo.ca.

JUN 6

Silent Art Auction and Open House

Auction of student artwork to benefit the homeless. Burnaby North Secondary School. 751 Hammarskjold Drive. 7 - 9 pm. 604-664-8550.

JUN 6

The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil

Free documentary screening. 7:30 pm at Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia St

JUN 7

Snatam Kaur live in concert with Guru Ganesha Singh

7:30pm, West Point Grey United Church, 4595 W. 8th Ave., Tickets at Yoga West, 2662 W. 4th Ave., 604-732-YOGA, \$25/40 or \$30/45 at the door. www.SpiritVoyage.com.

JUN 7

World Naked Bike Ride

The world's largest naked protest against oil dependency and car culture. 2 pm at Sunset Beach. www.world-nakedbikeride.org/vancouver.

JUN 7

The politics of containment of Haiti

Author Peter Hallward examines the role of foreign

powers, including Canada, in overthrowing Haiti's elected government. 7 pm. at Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia St. Free.

JUN 7 - 8

In the House Festival

Fourteen different performances taking place in living rooms and backyards in the Commercial Drive neighborhood. www.inthehousefestival.com.

JUN 9

With or Without God: Why the Way we Live is More Important than What We Believe

Gretta Vosper will talk on her new book. 7 pm. at Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia St. Free.

JUN 13

Lt. General Romeo Dallaire

The presentation will focus on heightening awareness of the injury pandemic in Africa. 7:30pm Croatian Cultural Centre, 3250 Commercial Drive. \$45/25. www.cnis.ca.

JUN 13

The World Behind the World: Living at the Ends of Time

Author Michael Meade will present a mythological interpretation of current events. 7 pm. at Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia St. Free.

JUN 14

SHAMANIC DRUMMING & DREAMING CIRCLE:

Learn to experience insight/healing from your Nature Spirit Totem guardians. At Vancouver Multi-Cultural Society, 1254, W. 7th. By donation. Earthsong Healing Circles. 604.418.9636. 7-10pm. www.shamanichealing.info

JUN 14

Dog Day Afternoon Dog parade, training, contests, etc. 11am. Trout Lake Community Centre.

JUN 18

Full Moon Festival of Humanity Attend a free presentation about the Full Moon Festival and participate in a Transmission Meditation, a form of group meditation. 7:30pm. YWCA Hotel, 733 Beatty Street.

JUN 19, & 20 - 22

Basic DNA Theta Healing with Loretta Mohl: Free lecture sponsored by the Canadian College of Healing Arts. Register at 780-910-5052 or email Loretta@CanadianCollegeofHealingArts.com, www.CanadianCollegeofHealingArts.com

JUN 21

Annual Wolfsong Chanting Circle

Summer Solstice Celebration. Participate drumming and singing shared sacred healing chants from the Spirit of the Land. At Vancouver Multi-Cultural Society, 1254 W. 7th. By donation. 7-10pm. Earthsong Healing Circles. 604.418.9636.

JUN 26

Formula for Health: Raw food author Paul Nison give a presentation that'll transform your life. 1440 W.12th Avenue. 6 pm. \$17/\$12 (RawBC members). RSVP: info@rawbc.org

JUL 3 - 6

"Body Talk" with Chimera Project. Free dance workshops for teens and all July 3 - 6, 2008. Performance July 9. Nanaimo. Register by June 23. Call 250.716.3230.

JUL 5 - 6

Thought Field Therapy Training: Discover how to use the body's energy system to eliminate emotional pain. Satisfaction Guaranteed. 14 CECs. Vancouver. www.DrNg.net, (250) 964 0118.

JUL 13 - 19

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JUL 20 - 26

Gangaji: Vancouver Silent Retreat offers continuous support for resting your attention on the truth alive in your heart. At UBC. On campus residence and meal packages available. www.gangaji.org, 1-800-267-9205

SUNDAYS

The Centre for Spiritual Living uniting the world in love. Inspired by the teachings of Deepak Chopra and Louise Hay. You'll love our Sunday services, 11AM. Children welcome. 1495 W. 8th Ave., Vancouver, 604-321-1225, www.cslvancouver.com

SOS (Science of Spirituality): See Resource Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria. 604-277-1247. All Welcome. www.sos.org

Unity of Vancouver: Empowering people to create prosperity, health and loving relationships through the practical application of spiritual principles. Sunday Services 11AM, 5840 Oak St., Vancouver (604) 266-6281.

MONDAYS


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TUESDAYS

Children of War fundraiser at Chai Gallery at East is East, 4413 Main St. @ 28, 7:30PM-1:30AM, 604-879-2020. See Wed. listing for more info. www.thechildrenofwar.org.

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Snatam Kaur Concert June 7
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Hawaiian Medicine Circle: 7PM. Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha, tea and snacks. \$10 donation. At Hale Ola, 1215 Madison Ave., Burnaby. 604-431-7474. Call Kumu Kaimana.

Children of War fundraiser: At Chai Gallery, upstairs at East is East. Local musicians & traditional dancers, 7:30PM-1:30AM, 3243 W. Broadway. \$25/door, 778-837-1862, www.thechildrenofwar.org.

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Three Fridays a month. Alcohol & smoke-free. 9pm, 2114 W. 4th Ave. @ Arbutus. \$10/5. www.justdance.ca.

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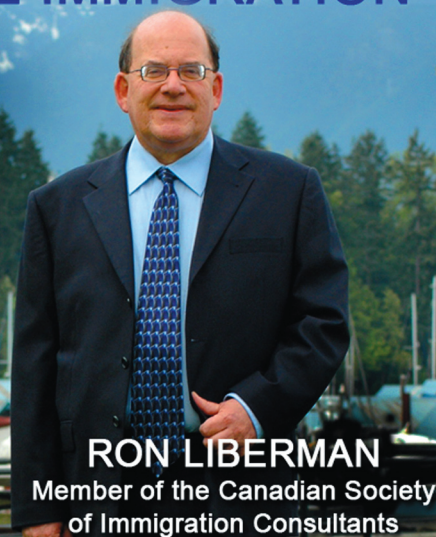
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On Track Zodiac

JUNE 2008 Adrien Dillon



ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

A possible adjusting of your temporal desires occurs when you have a glimpse into a more spiritualized way of relating. Your need for tenderness becomes overwhelming to the point of breaking through to the other side. You could find you move from the corporeal to more refined self expression.



TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)

To do something that holds no purpose and has no effect is to do something in vain. The same line of thinking holds true for vanity. You might see the meaning behind your thoughts and actions. Taurus has the gift of stability and security making the destination of your efforts substantial.



GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)

Where Mercury falls in your birth chart will have a resonating effect on communications and agreements, but it presently goes counter to its usual course. Whether you seek more fame, a promotion or basic recognition, you may wish to lie low and not schedule too many plans.



CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Your thirst for knowledge will be coupled with a desire to openly exchange knowledge and bridge any gaps hampering your present relationships. Like minded individuals will come to bear witness to your versatility and desire for synchronous movements of the heart.



LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

You may have noticed that your mind is not as fuzzy and your sense of the future not as bleak. Some experiences have brought you around to the bare-bones and obviousness of your personal truths. Any powerful force which shakes your foundation can bring improved concentration as a consequence.



VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

You now can leap headlong into radical new experiences as if a cage door has been swung open. Personal finesse and agility is part of your mercurial nature. You're a spry revolutionary.



LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

Your desire to keep the status quo may be strong but your wish to carve out your own niche could be stronger. Perhaps the generic sameness that is your emotional heritage no longer gives you the freedom to express your uniqueness. An authority figure could challenge you to break free from tradition.



SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

To hold yourself and others in high regard and build trust with those you admire are all gestures of respect. This you might learn as the tipping of the scales balance more toward self esteem. Passions run high and physical strength is heightened. You will do much to keep physical activity a priority.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

A watchful eye sits at the port of entry to your consciousness. You will not allow a rogue near the temple. But if you haven't developed the tenacity to recognize risk from that which belongs in your life, you will certainly learn it now.



CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

As in yoga, a twist is a great chance to see things from a different angle. An inversion clears the head, helps with concentration and increases blood supply to the brain. The times ahead have much to do with the correlation of your body and the connection to the small voice within.



AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

It is a riddle that while Neptune is about alienation, deception and the intangibles in life, it is also the benefactor of solutions and promise. While an escape to present circumstances may be desired, a resolve could also be near. Your spiritual curiosity is increasing.



PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

Your social circle widens to include friends that come back into your life and you may also encounter new play mates. You feel the excitement of sharing in the most convivial of settings. You too are a companionable friend with an aura of openness, giving as much as you receive.

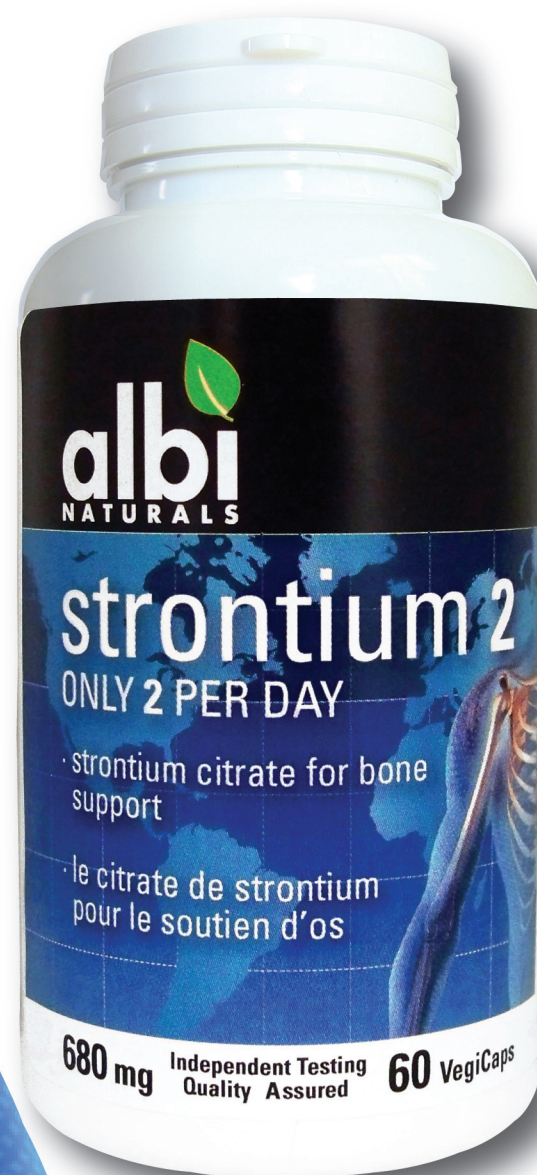
Adrien Dillon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 33 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing, adrien.dillon@gmail.com, members.shaw.ca/adrien.dillon



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